No. 198 • January, 1992 • $3.95 ($4.75 Can.)

# AMAZING HEROES

## HULK ARTIST DALE KEOWN INTERVIEWED

ALSO:
*HULK* WRITER
PETER DAVID

AND:
OVERWEIGHT SUPERHEROES
(We're not referring to you, Mr. Hulk, sir.)

*What would life be like if your career were in the hands of a subway graffiti artist?*

*What would life be like if sleep meant waking up in another dimension?*

*Ask Connie.*

© 1992 Debbie David/st.EVE Prod.

Follow the ODD series in PANORAMA

PANORAMA No. 2 - PIGEON LASAGNE, with back-up stories by Batton Lash and Jim Wheelock.

Still Available:

PANORAMA No. 1 - 21-page origin! With back-up stories by Neil Feigeles, Cathy Greenfield and Jim Wheelock.

$2.50 plus 75¢ p+h for the first book; 50¢ for each additional (check or money order to "Debbie David")

ST.EVE PRODUCTIONS - P.O. Box 1609, New York, NY 10159-1609

# EDITORIAL

**Xan Can Do:** First of all, I'd like to start off this issue with a special thanks to Al of Xanadu Comics for helping us out with the Marvel preview story in this issue's "Newsline" section. Xanadu's located in Seattle's University District, if you'd like to check it out.

**About This Issue:** This here's our Hulk issue, but the contents are a little different than what we originally planned.

Peter Sanderson, our popular Silver Age essayist, was unable to deliver his Hulk essay. I gave him an invitation to turn one in anytime he wants though, as I like running Sanderson essays in *any* issue.

Fortunately, we have a good replacement. A Peter David interview seemed like a natural idea for the issue, but since Peter was interviewed in these pages just two years ago, it seemed a little soon for that. So I asked Peter if, being a writer and all, he would like to write something about the Hulk.

"Well," he said, "how long of an article would you want?"

"Oh, any length you want, really," I replied non-committedly.

"Oh come on Tom," he rejoined, "pretend you're an editor."

"All right then, how about 15 to 20 pages?"

"*Fifteen Pages*!?"

"Okay, okay, just write anything under ten pages and I'll run it in our "Perspective" column."

"That's more like like it. I mean, 15 pages is ridiculous at this short a notice." And he was right. It was.

Then, just as I realized we wouldn't be getting the Sanderson essay, Peter called me up. "Hello, Tom. I finished the essay and it's 15 pages. It would've been more, but I forced myself to keep it short."

And that's why we have no "Perspective" this issue. You know, the only thing about editing that amazes me more than how often things go wrong is how often things go right completely by accident.

Incidentally, last issue's terrific Wonder Woman essay by Richard Howell was also assigned at the last minute, was also supposed to be short, and also turned into just the feature that we needed. All this recent good fortune's bothering me, 'cause I know that my bad luck's going to have a lot to make up for.

**Warning—This essay is rated PG:** You know, there's a raging debate that goes on and off in super-hero comics. Mainly, it's whether their crotches should have, er. . . bumps.

Super-hero opponents have often noted that most four colored costumed crimefighters lack, er, bumps. They use this as evidence that super-heroic fantasies include the denial of the existence of sex while at the same time excelling in the portrayal of secondary sex characteristics (muscles, breasts, that stuff). This means that super-hero comics are primarily homoerotic, and therefore, (though they never explained why) harmful.

(Of course, most super-heroes from the Golden Age—when most of this talk started—also lacked nostrils, but nobody ever saw any significance in *that*.)

The solution to the, er, bump problem, of course, is to draw the, er, bumps. And since super-hero anatomy is generally exaggerated and idealized, the, er, bumps have to be exaggerated along the same lines to make them look natural. The result? They look . . . homoerotic.

The reason I brought this whole thing up? Well, Kevin Maguire, one of the two popular super-hero artists who does draw, er, bumps (the other is Adam Hughes), recently did the interiors and cover to *The Adventures of Captain America* #1. And *Adventures* featured an embossed cover. And that meant that you could not only see Captain America's er, bump on this cover—you could *feel* Captain America's er, bump. No one's ever going to call *him* sexless again!

A serious note here. Super-heroes are *always* going to have a certain amount of subliminated eroticism in them, mostly because they do contain idealized male and female figures engaged in mostly non-sexual activities. That doesn't mean that they're *only* about subliminated sexual urges, or that the symbolism that is there necessarily exists at mind-warping levels, but it *is* there.

You might argue that Batman *has* to look like a bodybuilder so that he can look convincing when punching out the Joker's goons. But bodybuilders are not the strongest of athletes, and they're certainly not the swiftest or most agile, nor do they have great endurance. If Batman really was the world's greatest athlete, he'd look a lot less pumped-up than he does in most modern appearances.

I remember watching a contest of strong men on television years back. The contestants were evenly divided between four weightlifter types and four bodybuilders, including Lou Ferrigno, who had just debuted as the Incredible Hulk. A Marvelite proud and true, I watched with rapt attention, rooting for "The Hulk" all the way. The result? All of the bodybuilders but Lou were eliminated in the first round, and "The Hulk" went on to place fourth out of four in the final round. Though he proved that bodybuilders can be good at some feats of strength (I was impressed to learn that he really *could* bend a crowbar), when it came to outright lifting and pulling, he was a welterweight compared to the fat, middle-aged men he was up against. I came to the uneasy conclusion that bodybuilding wasn't about being strong; it was about looking strong.

So why does Conan have muscles out to there? Largely because it represents an idealized version of the male form, an ideal that's been portrayed for thousands of years in western civilization and which, in reality, is not only harder to realize but is not as impressive or useful.

So what does this mean? It means that super-heroes are fantasy. Gee. Glad we figured that one out.

**Coming Up:** Next issue is our spotlight on Valiant Comics, in which we ask, "Is Jim Shooter going to have the last laugh after all?" Also, there's a preview of the Innovation's new *Nightmare on Elm Street* series (written by *AH*'s Andy Mangels), featuring the first full origin of Freddy.

Then, it's 200th issue time, with the strangest theme ever to grace theses pages: An All Comics Issue. Yes, the columns *and* features will be all comics about comics! The lead feature and cover will be by none other than Scott McCloud, previewing his ambitious new comic book about comics. Also appearing will be Fred Hembeck, Ty Templeton, Matt Feazell, and many, many more. Plus for you prose fans, plenty news, reviews and letters, and a climactic confrontation between "The Cartoonist" and "Strom's Index." Watch for it!

After that, it's our Cerebus issue featuring a major interview with Dave Sim, creator of the longest running (and one of the most popular) independent title ever.

Be seeing you.

—THOMAS HARRINGTON

## "ANYONE EXCEPT THE HULK" 26

When Peter David was trying to establish himself as a writer, he knew he prove himself with any character. Except for that big, green dumb one. . .

*essay by Peter David*

## THE INCREDIBLE KEOWN 32

*The Incredible Hulk* brightened the weekends of young Dale Keown. Now, Keown has returned the favor by helping to boost ol' Greenskin's sales.

*interview by Len Wong*

## MY GOLF-BALL, MY DESTINY? 41

The creators of *Lone Wolf & Cub* doing a series on golf? Adventure comics about organ donors? It's all part of why Japan has the world's biggest comics scene.

*feature by Ed Henderson*



# CONTENTS

**46 TEN OF A KIND** It's Back! "Ten Hefty Heroes" who give new meaning to the term, "heroic proportions." *by Gary Robinson*

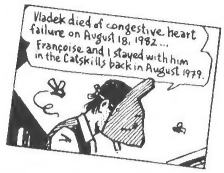
**7 NEWSLINE** Marvel's 1992 previews. *by Staff*

**53 INFERNAL GALL** What do Len Wein and Mark Twain have in common. No, Twain never wrote *Swamp Thing*. . . *by Adam-Troy Castro*

**57 BACKSTAGE** Holy Unethical Journalism, Batman! Someone's swiped those top secret Penguin photos! *by Andy Mangels*

**62 A FEW WORDS WITH. . .** Seth, the artist/writer of the new series, *Palooka-ville* *by Jeff Lang*

**66 COVER GALLERY** Caveman covers! Almost as popular as dinosaurs. *by Don Rosa*


Wladek died of congestive heart failure on August 18, 1982...
Francoise and I stayed with him in the Catskills back in August 1979.

**70 REVIEWS** Bruce Canwell goes on a comics gambling spree. *Maus II* is as good as the original. *by Various*

**15 COMING DISTRACTIONS** *Staff*

**85 AMAZING READERS** *Readers*

**89 THE CARTOONIST** *T.S. Wood*

**90 STROM'S INDEX** *David Strom*

**COVER BY DALE KEOWN**

issue #198 STAFF january 1992

**Editor:** *Thomas "Within" Harrington*
**Executive Editor:** *Kim "Each" Thompson*
**Art Director:** *Mark "Of" Thompson*
**News Correspondents:** *Isaac Alexander Edwin "Us" Herington & Sam "Offtimes" Kujava*
**Production Assistants:** *Roberta "There" Gregory, Jason "Dwells" Lutes, & Pat "A" Moriarity*
**Typesetting:** *Andrew "Mighty" Herington*
**Circulation:** *Sharon "Raging" Kingsford & Shanna "Fury" Brown*
**Publisher:** *Fantagraphics Books, Inc.* **Printed at:** *Port Publications*

## CONTRIBUTOR'S INFO

**Art:** Address all submissions to Mark Thompson, Art Director, *Amazing Heroes*, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115. Send good copies or stats please. *Put your name and address on the back of each piece of art. Always include an S.A.S.E. if you wish your material returned.*

**Writing:** Address all submissions to Thomas Harrington, Editor, *Amazing Heroes*, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115. Enclose an S.A.S.E. Submissions must be typed, double-spaced. Keep a copy of your manuscript. *Always put your name, complete address, and phone number on the first page of each article.*

## INDEX TO ADVERTISERS


Artists Asylum ..... 24-25
Comics Interview ..... 68, 69, 84
Fantagraphics ..... IBC
St. Eve Productions ..... IFC


## AD RATES

**Full page ad** ..... **$150**
*[Format: 5 1/2" x 9"]*
**Half page ad** ..... **$80**
*[Format: 3 5/8" x 6 1/2" (island); 5 1/2" x 4 1/2" (horizontal)]*
**Third page ad** ..... **$60**
*[Format: 1 3/4" x 9" (vertical); 3 5/8" x 5" (island); 5 1/2" x 3" (horizontal)]*

## DISTRIBUTORS

ACTION DIRECT, 114 "A" Bldg., 1401 Fairfax Trafficway, Kansas City, KS 66115, U.S.A. (913) 281-5240; ANDROMEDA PUBLICATIONS LTD., 2113 Dundas Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M6R 1X1, Canada. (416) 593-9894; CAPITAL CITY DISTRIBUTORS, 2827 Perry Street, Madison, WI 53713, U.S.A. (608) 274-8987; DESTINY DISTRIBUTORS, INC., 13609 NE 126th Place, Suite 150, Kirkland, WA 98034, U.S.A. (206) 823-0171; DIAMOND DISTRIBUTORS, 1720 Belmont Ave. Bay C-2, Baltimore, MD 21207, U.S.A. (301) 298-1184; FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, INC., 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115, U.S.A. (206) 524-1967; MULTI-BOOK & PERIODICAL, 4136 S. Service Road, Burlington, Ontario, Canada, L7L 4X5 (416) 632-5573; NEPTUNE, 197 28th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11232 U.S.A. (718) 965-9165; SECOND GENESIS, 1112 NE 21st ST. Portland, OR 97232 U.S.A. (503) 281-1821; STYX COMICS SERVICE, 1858 Arlington Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2X 1W6, Canada. (204) 586-8547; SUPERHERO ENTERPRISES, 70 Morris St., Morristown, NJ 07960, U.S.A. (201) 455-1211; TITAN DISTRIBUTORS, Ltd., P.O. Box 250, London E3 3LT, England. (01) 538-8300.


**AMAZING HEROES #198 (ISSN 0745-6506), January, 1992.** Published monthly by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Editorial, business, and Offices of Publication: 7563 Lake City Way N.E., Seattle, WA 98115. Entire contents copyright © 1992 Fantagraphics Books, Inc. All rights reserved. No material herein may be copied or reproduced in any manner whatsoever (excluding brief excerpts used for review purposes) without written consent of the publisher. Second-class postage paid at Port Washington, WI and additional mailing offices.

**POSTMASTER:** Please send Form 3579 to *AMAZING HEROES*, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115
One-year subscription in U.S.: $52.80; outside U.S.A., $70.00 in U.S. funds, please.



*COVER ART ©1992 Dale Keown, Hulk ©1992 Marvel. ARTICLES ©1992 respective authors. ILLUSTRATIONS ©1992 as follows (owner/page): ©1992 A-Plus 46a; ©1992 Kevin Atkinson 76, ©1992 Atlas 67b; ©1992 Kamijo Atsuhiro/Young Sunday 44c; ©1992 Donna Barr 56a; ©1992 Big Jo/Bear Cub 42a; ©1992 Boswell 54a, ©1992 Brave New Words 15; ©1992 Roger Brough/Sword in Stone Productions 45c, 49b, 67a, d; ©1992 Capp Enterprises 13b; ©1992 Cineme '84, 64; ©1992 Dan Curtis Productions 10; ©1992 DC 49c, 51, 66a-d, 67c, 71, 80, 90; ©1992 Kim Deitch 18, ©1992 Anton Fest 13a; ©1992 Ben Edlund 122; ©1992 Eternity 34a-b, 76, 77; ©1992 Fleetway 11; ©1992 Roberta Gregory 56b; ©1992 Hanna-Barbera 57; ©1992 Harvey 46b, ©1992 HBO 58; ©1992 Innovation 19; ©1992 Kira Inoue/Young Jump 42c,43; ©1992 Yasuhiko Inoue/Animal House 42b; ©1992 Kristine Krystine 16; ©1992 Don Lomax 46a, ©1992 Lucasfilm, Ltd. 17; ©1992 Marvel 4a, 7, 8, 9, 26, 27, 28a-c, 30a-b, 31, 32b, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 46a, 46d, 48, 49d, 50, 53, 55, 59, 73, 79, 82, 90, ©1992 Pat Moriarity 5b, 60b, ©1992 Nelson Films 75, ©1992 Makoto Ogino/Young Jump 44d,45, ©1992 Paramount 61; ©1992 Harvey Pekar 54b; ©1992 Seth 5c, 62, 63b, 64a-b, 65 a-b, ©1992 Art Spiegelman 5d, 70, ©1992 Studio 91 Creations 21; ©1992 Aro Tenguchi/Comic Morning 41,44a; ©1992 3-D Zone 23; ©1992 United Feature Syndicate 72; ©1992 Western Publishing Company, Inc. ©1992 Viz 14; ©1992 Vortex 63a, Voyager 12, 63b; READER ART ©1992 respective artists. Characters ©1992 respective owners. THE CARTOONIST ©1992 Teri S. Wood.*


## NEXT ISSUE:

# VALIANT COMICS!

- **How They Hit it Big with Super-Heroes**
- **What's Coming Next**

**Also:**

**The *Birth* of Freddy Krueger**

**Adam-Troy Castro on *MAUS II***

***AMAZING HEROES #199* On Sale Next Month!**



# NEWSLINE

## MARVEL'S "BIG GUNS" FOR 1992

Marvel has released its preview for 1992. Unlike the previous two years, there are no plans (yet) for a big #1 issue campaign like those for *Spider-Man* and *X-Men*. Instead, Marvel is creating whole families of titles in imitation the highly successful X-Men and Spider-Man groups.

### Big Guns

"As the crooks get meaner, the heroes have to get tougher, especially those with no special powers or mutant abilities to fall back on." Since Marvel's only real "powerless" vigilante is the best-selling Punisher, they've decided to join him with characters, whose styles "very much agree with The Punisher's."

*Cage* is revamped and returns.

The Punisher deals with the Kingpin's Channel Tunnel conspiracy.

Joining the new *Punisher War Zone* and the revamped *Death's Head* and *Cage* are:

*Nomad* (written by Fabian Nicieza, pencilled by S. Clarke Hawbaker & Kirk Jarvinen, inked by Mark McKenna), starring the former sidekick to the Captain America's of the '50s, now trying to learn to live in the '90s. He's travelling across America (just like Jack Kerouac!), "stomping crime along the way." (Okay, maybe not *exactly* like Jack Kerouac.) The man without a country will take any job to get by, but will inevitably have to play hero wherever he goes. The first issue in March finds him in Seattle, where he meets the "Favor Banker," a mystical character who grants "favors" as loans before collecting on them with interest. Future issues will guest star the USAgent, still determined to arrest the Nomad.

In April, *Silver Sable and the Wild Pack* (written by George Caragonne, pencilled by Steve Butler, inked by Jan Harps), will star the beautiful mercenary from *Amazing Spider-Man*. She'll hire anyone talented enough to help her, even if their reputations are questionable (Sandman, Paladin), or downright notorious (Absorbing Man)! The first issue finds the Wild Pack working for none other than Doctor Doom, and we learn that there are connections between Doom's Latveria and Sable's home country of Symkaria. The line-up of the Pack will be constantly changing, a la *Suicide Squad*.

In May, *Terror, Inc.* (written by D. G. Chichester, illustrated by Jorge Zaffino), is a supernatural assassin "in Armani suits and Italian leather shoes." Selling his talents out to the highest bidder, he has the ability to steal the limbs from others, gaining

*The Spirits of Vengeance* begins the "Ghost Rider Family" titles.

their abilities until the limb decays. Thus, he could have the powers of the Hulk, Doctor Strange, and Quicksilver—until gangrene sets in. The first issue pits him against Damon Hellstrom's father (formerly called Satan). In the process, he acquires Hellstrom's powers. This title also ties into the big "Rise of the Midnight Sons" promotion.

In the *Punisher* bi-weeklies, the Kingpin has a plan to cash in on the tunnel being completed under the English Channel. Appropriately enough, it's by the British creative team of writers Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning and penciller Doug Braithwaite; *Punisher War Journal* will have a summer crossover with Daredevil and Nomad in Las Vegas, fighting a gang that's taking the place of the Kingpin. *The Punisher Armory* returns with a third issue.

*The Punisher Summer Special* will have several stories, including a De Sade story written by Pat Mills. A villain takes over a shopping mall in *The Punisher Christmas Special* in a story written by Steven Grant and John Hebert. *Til Death Do Us Part* delves into the Punisher's pre-vigilante past, with a script by Stan "The Man" Lee. Jim Salicrup and Barry Dutter provide the story, and Cynthia Martin and Joe Rubinstein handle the art. *Blood & Glory*, the Punisher/Captain America team-up series, has been resolicited for March.

### Midnight Sons

The success of *Ghost Rider* has prompted Marvel to create a whole "Ghost Rider Family." The new titles & characters will be introduced in a crossover series beginning in *Ghost Rider* #28.

Johnny Blaze, former Ghost Rider, is content to now live his life running the Quentin Carnival until one of his employees tells him that he's a focal point for magic, including evil magic. When his son is kidnapped, he has to try to get him back with help from the new Ghost Rider. Afterwards, Ghost Rider, Blaze, and his crew will form *The Spirits of Vengeance* (written by Howard Mackie, illustrated by Adam Kubert) in June, fighting evil in all its forms.

*Morbius, the Living Vampire* (written by Len Laminski, pencilled by Ron Wagner, inked by Mike Witherby), returns in July, and, compelled to drink human blood to survive, decides to drink the blood of criminals. Disguised as Dr. Morgan Michaels, he leads a terrifying double life.

Though generations of her family have sworn to keep the evil book called *The Darkhold* (written by Christian Cooper, pencilled by Richard Case, inked by Mark McKenna) out of dangerous hands, young Victoria Montesi has never really believed in it. Then she finds she has the psychic ability to find the book's lost pages—and its victims. Assisted by Interpol agent Sam Buchanan and Professor Louise Hastings, she begins her dangerous search in August.

In September, Hannibal King (a "cured" vampire who will nonetheless never be able to regain his lost humanity), Blade (who went on a lifelong hunt for vampires after his mother was slain by one), and Frank Drake (a descendent of the original Dracula), form the *Nightstalkers*, written by D. G. Chichester, pencilled by Ron Garney, and inked by Tom Palmer. Officially known as "Borderline Investigative Services," they are determined to hunt down the supernatural in all its forms. One of their first clients is the vampire Lilith (though they don't know that), who hires them to kill Johnny Blaze and the Ghost Rider!

*Nightstalkers.*

In October, *Ghost Rider: Fear* (written by Howard Mackie, pencilled by Lee Weeks, inked by Al Williamson) pits the Ghost Rider against a more-powerful-than-ever Scarecrow, and not even Captain America may be able to help.

### Marvel 2093

The year 2093 will see the birth of the "second heroic age" in which superheroes have the kind of powers needed to make them stand out in the high tech world of the future. *Spider-Man 2093* appears in September, *The Punisher 2093* will appear in December, and (uh-oh) *Doctor Doom 2093* will appear in October. The first truly "new" hero of the era, *Ravage*, will be written by Stan Lee. Other writers and artists on these titles have yet to be named.

### The Infinity Wars

Beginning in April, this sequel to *The Infinity Gauntlet*, will have Earth's heroes replaced by evil doppelgangers who obey an extradimensional mastermind. The dire circumstances force Thanos to team up with Adam Warlock and Galactus to join forces with Doctor Strange and the Silver Surfer. Jim Starlin and Rom Lim are the creative team.

### Masterworks

From August to November, the *Marvel Masterworks* will be: Iron Man from *Tales of Suspense* #39-50, *Fantastic Four* #31-40 & *Annual* #2, a second Doctor Strange collection from *Strange Tales*, and *Amazing Spider-Man* #41-50 & *Annual* #3.

### Cosmic Heroes & Science Fiction

In *Guardians of the Galaxy*, The crystalline Martinex forms his own group, The Galactic Guardians.

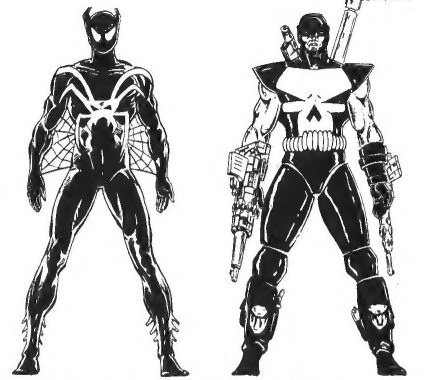
Galactus fires Nova and replaces her with his most ruthless herald yet in *Silver Surfer*. In the new *Alien Legion* series, *One Planet at a Time*, the Legion faces their greatest threat ever—the Vreel. Mike McMahon illustrates the *Alien Legion Special*.

*Akira* wraps it all up in #37, which will be followed by two more issues, the first containing unseen *Akira* art, the second containing Akira art by American artists. The *Akira* paperbacks will continue, of course. *Akira* will be followed by *Farewell to Weapons*, a one-shot that will be part of a projected series of Otomo specials. It will be followed by Otomo's *Memories*.

Years after beginning his adaptation of *Stars My Destination*, Howard Chaykin will finally complete it for Epic. The classic science fiction novel by (part time comic book writer) Alfred Bester is about a man's lifelong quest for vengeance.







Marvel 2093: future history versions of Spider-Man and the Punisher.

Doug Murray adapts Isaac Asimov's classic "Three Laws of Robotics" into *Robot City* (illustrated by Paul Rivoche), based on the robot tales of Asimov and others. Two humans become the prime suspects for murder when the only other human in the robot city is found murdered. And of course, robots are programmed never to kill. . .

### Fantasy

*Epic*, Marvel's fantasy anthology, will return, this time edited by Dave Elliot of the award winning *Al*. Each issue will feature characters or themes that have appeared or will appear in Marvel's Epic imprint. *Nightbreed*, *Captain Confederacy*, and *Alien Legion* are just three of the titles that will get an issue.

Speaking of *Al*, it will also be published by Marvel, this time in full color. Brian Bolland, Grant Morrison, and Mike Mignola are just three of the names to look for.

### Humor

There will be a new *Groo* collection in August. The first eight issues of *She-Hulk* will be collected in a trade paperback.

Tee hee hee! Steve Purcell's *Sam & Max: Freelance Police* return in a color special of non-linear laughs. Then, *Sam & Max Go to the Moon* to save the asteroid's rat population from being eaten by the natives.

Cross the Marvel Universe with *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and you get *Slapstick* (written by Len Kaminski, pencilled by James Fry, inked by Terry Austin). Klutzy teen Steve Harmon is given the power of a "toon." He can be bent, torn, and tied in knots, and will bounce back every time. He'll need these powers against villains like Sweeney Toddler and Overkill.

### Action/Adventure

*Moon Knight* moves from Long Island to New York City, allowing many guest stars to pop up in the book. *Deathlok* battles the original Deathlok, Luther Manning.

In April, *Cops: The Job* (written by former NYC police officer Joe Jusko and Larry Hama, pencilled by Mike Harris, inked by Jimmy Palmiotti) focuses in on the crimefighters who *really* take the risks—the police. Partners Nick diCastro and Maureen "Mo" Donegan start out with a search for a serial killer.

Marvel and DC brought you *Superman Vs. Spider-Man*. Now Marvel and American Heritage bring you *The Civil War* (written by William Messner-Loebs & Will Shetterly, pencilled by George Woodbridge, Gray Morrow & Angelo Torres, inked by various), told in four one-shot specials. This series will tell a fictional story incorporating historical data. Sorry, Wolverine does not appear. (The Punisher does appear in *The 'Nam*, however.)

### TV & Movie, Other

Where *The Toxic Avenger* failed, *The Toxic Crusaders* might succeed. Adapting the cartoon series, it appears in March.

Evan Skoinick writes *Terminator 2: Time Bomb*, which takes place between *Terminator 1* and *Terminator 2*. It explains just *how* the rebels managed to capture and reprogram that Terminator.

John Bolton will be among the pencillers of *Dinosaurs*, a four-issue series detailing the rise and fall of the former rulers of the Earth. A rep-

resentative of the Museum of Natural History will act as a consultant.

### Horror

There will be a *Hellraiser* special in the summer and at Christmas, as well as *Hellraiser: Gone with the Wind*, a 48-page tale by Neil "Sandman" Gaiman and Pete Atkins, the writer of the *Hellraiser II & III* movies, with Kirstie finally consumating her relationship with Pinhead. Awwwwww. . .

*Mutants* ain't just X-Men. In this mini-series written by Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning and illustrated by John Higgins, a corporation tries to develop a virus that will allow people to adapt to harsh environments. The virus doesn't work, uh, as planned, but that doesn't stop it from spreading anyway.

In November, there is life after super-herodom. Daimon *Hellstrom* (formerly the Son of S*t*n), aided by his wife Patsy (formerly the Hellcat) and friend Isaac Christians (formerly the Gargoyle), comes back to fight the supernatural. But is he a master of demons or just a pawn? It's written by Rafael Nieves, and illustrated by Michael Bair.

### Drama

Yeah, you read it right. Drama.

This spring, James Hudnall pens an experimental (though clinically accurate) tale of an ordinary man who sinks into schizophrenia. "*Sinking* is unlike any tale that has ever been told in comics," says Marvel. Robert Ortaleza illustrates.

In March, *67 Seconds* (written by James Robinson, illustrated by Steve Yeowell) is an adventure that takes place in that exact amount of time, as a male-female reporting team experiences flashbacks during a life or death situation.

In April, the true to life adventures of a Peace Corp volunteer in Central Africa, *Tales From the Heart*, returns in the *Bloodlines* one-shot, focusing of the reign of the insane President Bokassa, a torturer who declared himself Emperor.

In *The Way of the Sorceror*, Karl Teller is a man who excels at getting political information through torture. What happens, then, when he tortures a sorceror? Fanz Henkel and Mike Dringenberg will tell you.

### Annuals

There will be a whopping 23 annuals next year, starting in February and contining weekly through August. They are: "Scattershot" (featuring the X-Men titles), a reunion of the original Defenders (in *Hulk, Namor, Silver Surfer*, and *Doctor Strange*), "The System Bytes" (*Punisher, Daredevil, Wonder Man, Guardians of the Galaxy*), "Assault on Armor City" (*Darkhawk, Avengers West Coast, Iron Man*), "The Hero Killers" (*New Warriors* and the Spider-Man titles), and "Citizen Kang" (in *Avengers, Captain America, Thor* and *Fantastic Four*).

The biggest mini-series of the year might be the unscheduled *Cable*, written & illustrated by Rob Liefeld. It reveal some some interesting information on the cyborg, including his reasons for forming X-Force.

### Marvel UK

Marvel UK will be ambitiously developing its own universe, which will be linked heavily to the existing Marvel Universe. Look for regular Marvel heroes & villains to appear in these titles.

The main villains in the Marvel UK universe are the "Board of Directors" of M.Y.S.T.E.C.H., an apparently "normal" corporation that is really an ambitious melding of the supernatural and technological. The *Death's Head II* cyborg is a product of MYSTECH and AIM.

*Warheads* is a group of mercenaries who are prepared to take great risks . . . for money. Taking a "Big Jump" down the "Worm-Hole," they could land anywhere in time or space, meaning they could find anything from instant riches to instant death.

*Digitek* features Ram, a digitized warrior who is the melding of an advanced computer program and a murdered scientist. Programmed to protect its computer matrix from those who would use it to their own evil ends (such as MYSTECH), it is confused by the human emotions "it" receives from its new body and memories.

*Hell's Angel* is a woman with a power suit giving her access to other planes of existence, allowing her to "dematerialize" in our dimension. She can even look into the past & future to a limited extent. The daughter of a MYSTECH board member, she is plotting against the company from within.

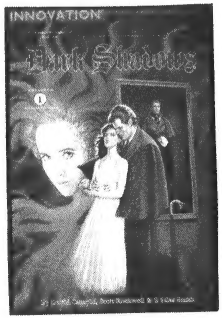
*Motormouth* is another heroine, a girl who comes into possession of a pair of trans-dimensional "trainers" that give her the ability to teleport. Intended to be a guinea pig for the shoes (the previous guinea pigs had died), she becomes a little too good at using them, and escapes MYSTECH's power. The corporation sends their most dangerous (though not their brightest) hitman, Killpower, to eliminate her. ●

## INNOVATION GOES BIG ON HORROR; *DARK SHADOWS* LEADS PACK

Look for the return of the cult Gothic soap opera of the '60s, *Dark Shadows* in a fully painted comic book that will be based not only on events in the series, but on unused scripts and story treatments by series creator Dan Curtis and his writers. The first storyline takes place during the ten-week vampirism cure that Barnabas undergoes under Dr. Julia Hoffman. Dave Campiti, Scott Rockwell and E. Silas Smith are the creative team.

Find out all about the true origin of Freddy Krueger in *Nightmare on Elm Street: The Beginning*, a four-part series telling the *complete* story of how Freddy became Freddy. Andy Mangels and David & Dan Day are the creative team. "The films essentially told portions of Freddy's origin—the events in Springwood, the trial, the Elm Street families' revenge, and Freddy's return, all in a sort of shorthand," said Mangels. "I'm sorting out any inconsistencies, making it all work, and fleshing out the details into this four-part story." Also, the *Freddy's Dead* adaptation will be collected in time for the movie's video release.

In *Vigil: Fall From Grace* ex-cop Grace Kimble is a vampire, but one who doesn't believe in killing. Any vampire who does kill becomes a target for her. Her latest opponent, however, is a late night talk show host with an army of fellow vampires protecting him. The two-issue black & white series is by Arvin Loudermilk and Mike Iverson, and features 52 pages of story in each issue. ●




*Dark Shadows* #1.







## MICE EVERYWHERE!

MAD ABOUT THE MAUS: Maus II, Art Spiegelman's long-awaited conclusion to his best-selling Holocaust story, was recently released, immediately hitting the bestsellers lists. The *New York Times* review said, "In recounting the tales of both the father and the son in *Maus*, Mr. Spiegelman has stretched the boundaries of the comic book form and in doing so has created one of the most powerful and original memoirs to come along in recent years." In a *Seattle Times* interview, Spiegelman said, "One of the things that drew me to comics in the first place was that they existed outside the normal critical establishment."

At least fifteen foreign editions are coming out. I've gotten 4 serious offers to turn my book into a TV special or movie. (I don't wanna.)
In May 1968 my mother killed herself. (She left no note.)
Lately I've been feeling depressed.
Alright Mr. Spiegelman... We're ready to shoot!...

*MAUS II* is a critical and commercial hit.

* * *

AND SPEAKING OF MICE: *The Art of Mickey Mouse* is a new book in which every conceivable type of artist takes a shot at delineating the most famous cartoon character in the world. Among the famous cartoonists contributing are Jack Kirby, Charles Schulz, Moebius, Robert Crumb, William Stout, Mark Newgarden, Mary Fleener, Victor Moscoso and the late Rick Griffin. John Stanley of *Little Lulu* fame contributed one of his first drawings in decades. "Certainly comics artists are some of the most exciting idea people in the world, and we were thrilled to have them join in the celebration of Walt's brain child," said co-editor Craig Yoe. Other artists in the Hyperion book include Andy Warhol, Peter Max, Maurice Sendak, and Michael Jackson.

* * *

FURST DIES: Anton Furst, who won an Oscar for his *Batman* set designs, died on November 24 after leaping eight floors from a parking garage. The English-born Furst was one of the first designers of laser special effects, designing the touring light show for The Who in the mid-'70s. His special effects company company Holoco worked on such films as *Star Wars, Superman, Alien*, and *Moonraker*. He was a production designer on *Company of Wolves, Full Metal Jacket* and *Awakenings*. He also designed the $15 million New York restaurant called Planet Hollywood. His *Batman* sets were recently incorporated into the DC universe.

* * *

RECORD COMIC BOOK SIGNING: The December 7 signing of the Batman/Judge Dredd team-up *Judgement on Gotham* at the Virgin Marble Arch in London was called "the biggest book signing of the year" by Fleetway, with 1400 copies sold in four hours. So many fans lined up to have their books signed by the creative team of John Wagner, Alan Grant and Simon Bisley that local merchants complained to the police, who tried to organize the line. "This is bigger than the David Bowie signing, bigger than the Sting signing," said the impressed store manager. "This is the biggest signing any Virgin store has ever had, anywhere!"

* * *

Bigger than Bowie? "Okay, perps, keep signing those books."

COMICS AREN'T JUST FOR CAPITALISTS ANYMORE: Americomics publisher Bill Black will serve as the editor-in-chief of the new comic book company being set up in Russia that will use Russian artists to produce American styled comic books for American and European distribution. One of the books scheduled is *Dawn Hunter*, based on the American-Russian production being filmed in St. Petersburg. The Film Company (yes, that's its name) is also negotiating to bring Bill Black's *Femforce* to the silver screen.

* * *

NEAT...SWEET...PETITE: Cartoonist Charles Addams, creator of macabre Addams Family, would probably find it appropriate that his greatest success would come after his death. *The Addams Family* film is a smash hit, two books have been released (*My Crowd* and the massive *World of Charles Addams*), and there's an exhibit at at the National Academy of Design entitled, *Hallowed Haunts: The Drawings and Watercolors of Charles Addams*. Addams' widow Tee has reservations about the film, though. "Looking at just one drawing is one thing...to somehow make two hours of that, I don't know, maybe it'll go."

* * *

BRADY'S BUNCH: Pat Brady, cartoonist of the *Rose is Rose* comic strip, won an achievement award from the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance for portraying Rose's husband Jimbo as "an average-sized man who admires large women." In the strip, Jimbo often expresses hope that Rose will become more "plump." Brady said he didn't expect "the enthusiasm this theme has generated from magazines and organizations," and says that the *Rose is Rose* jokes are "apparently only a tiny reflection of a more important idea whose time has come."

* * *

REVOLUTIONARY *WILL* BE TELEVISED: Revolutionary's *Conspiracy Comics* #1, covering the death of Marilyn Monroe, made the November 25 episode of *Entertainment Tonight* with publisher Todd Loren saying, "Basically, what it boils down to is that it was a Mafia hit." Co-host John Tesch said that "Both John Miner [Deputy D.A. on the Monroe case] and *Conspiracy Comics* believe that Monroe's autotopsy ignored a vital clue which could have virtually ruled out suicide." The next two issues of *CC* will investigate the deaths of President John F. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy.

* * *

MY KIND OF TOWN, TRUE BELIEVER: Chicago's *New City* magazine had a cover tribute to Stan Lee. The story by Larry Downes (who confesses to suffering from "Marvel Myopia") praises Lee as "The combination of the best teacher you ever had, your corniest uncle, and God." In the story, Lee admits he's not too sure about the overt politics in some newer comics. "I used to like the reader to discover symbolism and allegory, but I didn't like to hit them over the head with it." The magazine also had a feature on Gilbert & Jaime Hernandez, the *Love & Rockets* team.

* * *

A BIG "ZERO": "We expected more than 10,000 by the end of the redemption period—I just wasn't expecting the deluge to hit so hard and fast," confessed Valiant vice president Jon Hartz, who was buried by thousands letters ordering *Magnus Robot Fighter* #0, a special comic that could only be ordered with coupons from several issues of the regular title. "I think our post office people are beginning to hate us," joked Hartz. "This is a serious collectible."

* * *

ROUNDTABLE AWARDS: You have until January 27 to vote in the 1991 Roundtable Awards presented by New York City's *The Chronic Rift* TV show. Categories include: "Best Writer of a Novel, Short Story, or Comic Book," "Best Artist of a Comic Book," "Best Cover of a Novel or Comic Book," "Best Comic Book," "Best Overall Character," "Hall of Fame," and "Best Thing." Send your entries to: *The Chronic Rift*, PO Box 2224, New York, NY 10185-0023. Meanwhile, *The Chronic Rift* has announced its Spring schedule. Its superhero-themed shows include: "European Comic Books" (May 11).

* * *

CAMERON MEETS STAN: The December, 1991 *Internal Correspondence* from Capital City talked of an enthusiastic meeting between Stan Lee and James Cameron, who has been announced as the director of Carolco's *Spider-Man, The Movie*. Cameron reportedly said that he "never wanted to make a movie more than this one;" he plans to start it after completing his next picture, *The Crowded Room*.

* * *

ART MISSING: Hero comics reports that 26 pages of finished Lou Manna artwork from *Icicle* #2 and five pages of Mark Beachum pencils for *Rose* #1 are missing and have possibly been stolen. The Icicle story has her dressing up in an elf suit. The Beachum pencils are sketchy and show the heroine Rose battling vampires. Heroic Publishing would appreciate any information leading to return of the art.

* * *

TRUE NORTH: The Comics Legends Legal Defense Fund is assisting Andromeda Publications, the largest distributor of comic books in Canada. The store has been charged with seven counts of distributing obscene material. "This puts Andromeda in a bad situation," said CLLDF administrator Paul Stockton, "since they are basically being charged for distributing comics to shops that have been found guilty." The CLLDF would appreciate any donations to its cause of defending Canadian stores, distributors and creators from obscenity charges. Contributions can be sent to: P. O. Box 48873, Bentall Station, Vancouver, B.C., V7X 1A8 CANADA. ●

Jon Hartz and a few of the letters.

# MARCH & BEYOND: NOW ADAPTS *FREEJACK*, ARCHIE COMICS GO GREEN

**Archie:** Surprisingly, Archie seems to be taking the environmentalism more seriously than any other company. The company announced plans to shift its entire line to recycled paper in 1992, and is exploring soy-based inks and recycled cover stock. Three comics will also look at environmental issues: *Archie* #398, the *Zen Intergalactic Nina* series, and the upcoming *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Meet the Conservation Corps*.

*Archie* #400 will feature a "commemorative look" at the classic Archie-Betty-Veronica triangle.

**Byron Preiss Visual Products:** In July, *The Ray Bradbury Chronicles* will adapt works by the famous fantasy author. Volume One will feature a cover by Dave Gibbons and stories illustrated by Kent Williams, P. Craig Russell, and others. Bruce Jensen does the cover for Volume Two, which features a Gibbons adaptation of "Come into My Cellar."

**DC:** Events in *The Shield* #10, *The Fly* #9, and *The Comet* #10 will prepare readers for the formation of *The Mighty Crusaders*, the Impact line's first super-hero group. DC promises increased interaction amongst the various Impact titles in 1992.

**Disney:** For April, 3-D expert Ray Zone has created *Disney Comics in 3-D*, a 48-page collection of classic Disney comics by Carl Barks, Floyd Gottfredson, William Van Horn and Don Rosa, presented in three dimensions for the first time. A free pair of glasses will be included. *Uncle Scrooge* #267 will contain a bonus: a new, one page essay by Carl Barks, entitled "Who is Scrooge McDuck and What Makes him Tick?"

In April, May, and June, Disney comics fans will be able to collect a map of Duckburg. The nine pieces of the map will appear in various Disney titles, and fans who send in the proofs of purchase from all nine comics can win a set of electro-static stickers of all the Duckburg characters, and will also be eligible to win one of three pieces of original comic book art.

**Eclipse:** For those who love movie special effects, Eclipse announces its "F/X" imprint. The first F/X series is *Parts Unknown*, about a gang of evil aliens who plan to mate with Earth women and use the men as "spare parts." Beau Smith and animator C.B. Gorby are the creative team.

**Eclectus:** "Black Kite," the science fiction adventure originally published by Eternity, returns as an ongoing serial in *Airlock*. Also coming to the anthology is Josh Quagmire's "Cyberfox," about a future animatronic robot designed to look like a cartoon by—who else?—20th century cartoonist Josh Quagmire.

**Fantagraphics:** *Deadface* creator Eddie Campbell exposes his silly side in *The Cheque, Mate*, a $3.50 collection of humorous bits.

In Eros, love means never having to say you're sorry in Bob Fingerman's *Skinheads in Love* #1, featuring rough (but not racist) skinheads.

One of the most notorious titles of the smut glut returns as the title heroine of *Wendy Whitebread* #2 becomes "addicted" to sex. *100 Degrees in the Shade* is a combination thriller/sex book by the artist of *2 Hot Girls*. Harvey Award nominee Ho Che Anderson returns with *The Muse* #1, his first work since *I Wanna be Your Dog*. Roman gods return to "interact" with the mortals of today in *Modern Romans* #1, the first of a three-issue series by Virgil Heron.

*Wendy* is back!

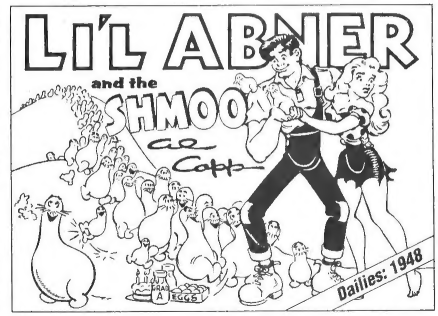
**Hero Graphics:** Hero will be reviving the *League of Champions* title in May. It will continue the numbering from the old series, and will start with #4. George Perez is scheduled to do #5, part of his six-issue crossover series that will also appear in *Southern Knights* and *Flare*.

Pleased with the sales of its two "slim format" titles, *Flare Adventures* and *Champion Classics*, Hero has decided to add a third title, *Flare—The Early Years* in May. The series, focusing on her life as a teenager in the Amazon, will have an all-new origin of Flare starting in issue #5. Another new slim format title, *Tales of the Arcane*, will explore the early history of many of the Hero characters. It will feature all-new material beginning with issue #5.

**Kitchen Sink:** *Omaha* creator & artist Reed Waller is undergoing treatment for colon cancer, and KS publisher Denis Kitchen has helped organize *Images of Omaha*, a benefit book that will be at least 36 pages long. Among the artists and writers commited to appear in the book are Dan Clowes, Will Eisner, Harlan Ellison, Phil Foglio, Neil Gaiman, Alan Moore, Steve Rude, and Mark Schultz. Much of the book will feature different interpretations of the character Omaha, but other kinds of tributes to Waller will appear as well. It will be edited by *Omaha* writer Kate Worley.

*Li'l Abner: 1948* reprints the first appearance of the Shmoos, the chubby little creatures who can free people from debt and hunger, and thus

*Li'l Abner* and the greatest threat to America's economy ever.



pose a tremendous threat to the American economy. Al Capp's Shmoos became as big a fad as the more recent Bart Simpson & Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Meanwhile, the second *Fearless Fosdick* collection, *The Hole Story*, will sport a special "bullet hole" riddled cover.

**Mirage:** Mirage plans to "branch out" and publish things aside from the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*; the company will announce the its new titles in the next few months.

Meanwhile, *TMNT* will now be done exclusively by Mirage Studio artists, a departure from the "guest star" issues that have appeared recently. Creators Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird will team-up again for the upcoming *TMNT* #50.

**Night Wynd Enterprises:** Blood and B-wang are called back into service to battle a deadly force that threatens to level their planet in Barry Blair's *Blitz* #1, the first of a three-part series.

**NOW:** *Freejack*, the Emilio Estevez/Anthony Hopkins/Mick Jagger action flick, will be a three-issue series from NOW. The first biweekly issue by Chuck Dixon, Ernie Stinger and Tony DeZuniga shows what happens when modern race car driver Alex Furlong crashes in 1992 and wakes up in 2009.

Marc Hansen and Ralph Snart return in *Ralph Snart Adventures* Vol. 4, #1. The first issue will contain one of four collector's cards. The three-issue series will feature code-approved newsstand version covers and non-code approved direct market covers.

**Personality:** The first issue of the four part *Slam Dunk Kings* series features a biography of Michael Jordan. *Star Trek Episode Guide* #1 begins a series featuring an episode guide to the original series.

**Viz:** Ryoichi Ikegami, the co-creator of *Crying Freeman* and *Mai*, teams up with Sho Fumimura for *Sanctuary*, billed as a look at the dark side of Japanese society. It features two friends, both part of the post-war generation whose non-traditional views have alienated them from the older generations. One tries to restructure Japan through traditional means, while the other opts to do it through organized crime. Western readers might be interested in seeing how two Japanese artists view the problems of their own society. The $4.95 comic will contain 80 pages per issue.

The new *Crying Freeman* series pits Freeman against a gang in Los Angeles' Chinatown. Freeman is captured by a beautiful gang leader while his wife plans his rescue. ●

*Sanctuary.*

## COMICS BESTSELLERS—DECEMBER

All figures from the December, 1991 Capital City *Internal Correspondence* newsletter. Figures represent direct market retail orders. Numbers in parentheses ( ) represent a title's overall position on a charts.

### TOP TEN COMICS (TOTAL $$$)

(The comics with the highest orders in terms of $$$ spent)

1. Ghost Rider/Wolverine/Punisher ..... Marvel
2. X-Men #5 ..... Marvel
3. Warlock & the Infinity Watch #1 ..... Marvel
4. Batman: Master of the Future ..... DC
5. Star Trek: Debt of Honor ..... DC
6. Uncanny X-Men #285 ..... Marvel
7. X-Force #7 ..... Marvel
8. Spider-Man #18 ..... Marvel
9. Batman Vs. Predator #2 ..... DC/Dark Horse
10. X-Factor #75 ..... Marvel

### TOP TEN COMICS (CIRCULATION)

(The comics with the most issues ordered)

1. X-Men #5 ..... Marvel
2. Uncanny X-Men #285 ..... Marvel
3. X-Force #7 ..... Marvel
4. Warlock & the Infinity Watch #1 ..... Marvel
5. Robin II #4 ..... DC
6. Spider-Man #19 ..... Marvel
7. X-Factor #75 ..... Marvel
8. Ghost Rider/Wolverine/Punisher ..... Marvel
9. Wolverine #51 ..... Marvel
10. Ghost Rider #22 ..... Marvel

### TOP TEN INDEPENDENT COMICS (CIRC.)

1 (19). Star Wars: Dark Empire #1 ..... Dark Horse
2 (23). Aliens: Genocide #2 ..... Dark Horse
3 (29). Predator: Cold War #4 ..... Dark Horse
4 (32). Terminator: Enemy Within #2 ..... Dark Horse
5 (67). Thing #1 ..... Dark Horse
6 (90). Magnus #10 ..... Valiant
7 (96). Rai #1 ..... Valiant
8 (103). Solar #7 ..... Valiant
9 (109). Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #42 ..... Mirage
10 (112). H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu #1 ..... Millenium

### TOP TEN BLACK & WHITE COMICS (CIRC.)

1 (85). QMAC #4 ..... DC
2 (109). Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #42 ..... Mirage
3 (116). Dark Horse Presents #57 ..... Dark Horse
4 (147). Savage Sword of Conan #194 ..... Marvel
5 (166). Cerebus #153 ..... Aardvark-Vanaheim
6 (170). Night of the Living Dead #2 ..... Fantaco
7 (175). Conan Saga #59 ..... Marvel
8 (183). Freak Brothers 20th Ann. Edition #1 . Rip Off
9 (185). Venus Wars #9 ..... Dark Horse
10 (187). Ironwood #8 ..... Fantagraphics

### TOP PUBLISHERS/MARKET SHARES

1. Marvel ..... 42.73%
2. DC ..... 27.53%
3. Dark Horse ..... 8.67%
4. Malibu ..... 1.42%
5. Valiant ..... 1.25%
6. Eclipse ..... 0.98%
7. Innovation ..... 0.90%
8. NOW ..... 0.82%
9. Fantagraphics ..... 0.81%
10. Viz ..... 0.48%

### TOP BOOKS ($$$)

1 (5). Star Trek: Debt of Honor ..... DC
2 (21). Lobo Slipcase Package ..... DC
3 (42). Aliens Vs. Predator Collection .... Dark Horse
4 (68). Yattering & Jack ..... Eclipse
5 (75). Lobo: Last Czarnian ..... DC

Marvel's price increase doesn't seemed to have hurt its business any. Two decades after its first appearance, Gilbert Shelton's *Freak Brothers* #1 is still a popular comic. DC's *Lobo* books went over well.



# February COMING DISTRACTIONS!

### AARDVARK—VANAHEIM

- ☐ **CEREBUS #155.**
- ☐ **CEREBUS: Church & State #26 & 27.**

### AC COMICS

- ☐ **FEMFORCE #46.**
- ☐ **GOOD GIRL ART QUARTERLY Winter '92.** Lead story: She-Cat and Yankee girl get in a "cat fight" (get it?) over a modelling job. By **Black & Turner.** *[Color & B&W comic; $3.95; 52 pages]*
- ☐ **JUNGLE GIRLS #4.**

### ACME COMICS

- ☐ **HERU, SON OF AUSAR #2.** Formerly titled, *Horus, Son of Osiris*.

### AJA BLUE COMIX

- ☐ **ACHILLES STORM/RAZMATAZ #7.**
- ☐ **BIO '90: The Prince of the Blood #1 (of 12).** A mutated scientist gets revenge. By **Butler, Von Eeden, Kach, & Weisfeld.** *[B&W comic; $2.50; 32 pages]*
- ☐ **RAZORBURN #1 (of 8).** Female psychopath from the pages of *Faust*. By **Beachum & Chang.** *[Color comic; $2.95; 32 pages]*

### ANDREWS & McMEEL

- ☐ **CALVIN & HOBBES: Attack of the Deranged Mutant Killer Monster Snow Goons.** By **Bill Watterson.** *[B&W & Color softcover; $8.95; 128 pages]*

### ANTARCTIC PRESS

- ☐ **FURRLOUGH #2.**
- ☐ **THE TROUBLE WITH TIGERS #2 (of 2).**

### ARCHIE

- ☐ **ARCHIE #399.**
- ☐ **ARCHIE DIGEST #114.**
- ☐ **ARCHIE ANDREWS WHERE ARE YOU? DIGEST #80.**
- ☐ **ARCHIE ANNUAL DIGEST #60.**
- ☐ **ARCHIE'S STORY & GAME DIGEST #23.**
- ☐ **ARCHIE'S PALS 'N GALS #631.**
- ☐ **BETTY & ME #198.**
- ☐ **BETTY & VERONICA #51.**
- ☐ **BETTY & VERONICA DOUBLE DIGEST #31.**
- ☐ **JUGHEAD #33.**
- ☐ **JUGHEAD JONES DIGEST #75.**
- ☐ **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #32.**
- ☐ **ZEN INTERGALACTIC NINJA #1 (of 3).** Fresh from black & white limbo comes *Zen Intergalactic Ninja*. In this 3-part series by **Ross Andru** and **Mike Esposito**, we learn the origin of Zen and the Recycled heroes just in time to cash in on the new fall toy line and TV cartoon. Direct market copies will have a bonus pull-out poster by Jim Fern. *[Color comic; $1.25]*

### ARIA PRESS

- ☐ **A DISTANT SOIL #5.**

### ARTLINE STUDIOS

- ☐ **KILLER SYNTHETIC TOADS #2.**
- ☐ **TALON #1.** Talon Vs. Thor and all of Asgard. Oh, come on. It's not *that* Thor. By **Decker, Lizana, & Mahfood.** *[B&W comic; $2.50]*

### BALDUCCI PUBLICATIONS

- ☐ **SNICKER MAGAZINE #14.** Tabloid styled newspaper featuring cartoons by **Drew Fiedman, Ace Backwords, Mark Marek** and others. *[B&W comic; $1.00; 20 pages]*

### BLAST BOOKS

- ☐ **MR. ARASHI'S AMAZING FREAK SHOW.** Nightmarish manga by **Suehiro Maruo.** *[B&W softcover; $10.95; 160 pages]*

### BLUE CAT

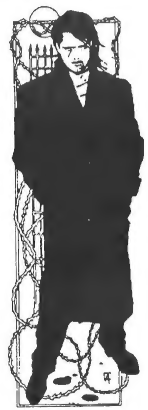
- ☐ **BLUE CAT 1991 COMICS ANNUAL #1.** By **various**. *[B&W comic; $1.95]*

### BRAVE NEW WORDS

- ☐ **CITIZEN NOCTURNE.** The story of Jack Morrissey, a human vampire, and his search for the succubus who stole his humanity. By **M. Dalton Allred.** *[B&W softcover; $9.95; 96 pages]*
- ☐ **CRAZY FOR THE GIRL #1.** Visit the fantasies of your typical teen-age comic nerd. Existential horror. By **Matt Howarth.** *[B&W comic; $2.50]*
- ☐ **INTRUDERS #1.** Meet Metro City's super-heroes—Plainclothes Division. By **Fuqua, Bigley, & Schaeffer.** Cover by George Perez. *[B&W comic; $2.50]*

### BURCHAM STUDIO

*Citizen Nocturne.*



☐ **DEMON NINJA #1.**

☐ **DEMON NINJA LIMITED EDITION #1.**

☐ **TOMB OF FRANKENSTEIN #1.**

☐ **TOMB OF FRANKENSTEIN LIMITED EDITION #1.**

## CALIBER PRESS

☐ **BAKER STREET #10.** The "Children of the Night" storyline concludes. By **Guy Davis.** [*B&Wcomic; $2.50*]

☐ **DEADWORLD #26.** Graphic or Tame, the contents are the same.

☐ **ELECTRIC BALLET #2.**

☐ **NEVER FORGOTTEN.** Spotlight on **Roland Mann**, author of *Cat and Mouse* and others. Illustrated by **Byrd, Butler & Branch** and **various.** [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

☐ **PRIVATE PAGES** Like we really need more Betty Page. By **R. G. Taylor.** [*B&W comic; $3.50*]

☐ **STREET SHADOWS #1 (of 5).** New & reprinted stories about ordinary people in the city. Written by **Kyle Garret**, illustrated by **Vince Locke, R. G. Taylor** and **various.** [*B&W comic; $2.95*]

☐ **TAD MARTIN #2.**

☐ **TAKEN UNDER #1 (of 3)** A new horror series in which a young man is in search of his father, who has already had his soul sold to the devil. By **Rodia & Clark.** [*B&W comic; $2.95*]

☐ **TRULY TASTELESS AND TACKY** What can I say that the name hasn't? By **Aaron Ward.** [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

☐ **WARPWALKING #3.**

## CALIBER/TOME PRESS

☐ **ADVENTURE OF THE MUSGRAVE RITUAL** Early Sherlock Holmes. By **Dan & David Day.** [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

☐ **BIZARRE WORLD OF BOSCH** Take a glimpse at the works that have twisted minds like Alan Moore and Neil Gaiman. [*B&W comic; $2.95*]

☐ **COLUMBUS: THE TRIALS OF DISCOVERY.** [*B&W comic; $2.95*]

☐ **DONNELLY MURDERS.**

☐ **THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK** From the twisted mind of Lewis Carroll. [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

☐ **LAW OF LIFE & Other Stories** Jack London, plus pictures. [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

## CARTOON BOOKS

☐ **BONE #4.**

## CAT-HEAD COMICS

☐ **BUZZARD #5.** By **J. R. Williams, Krystine Kryttre, & various.** [*B&W comic; $2.75; 36 pages*]

## CAT'S PAWS COMICS

**From *Buzzard*: One of Krystine Kryttre's Critters.**

☐ **MORGANA X #3.**

☐ **SUNWING #1.** The adventures of Rex Taylor, who unexpectedly becomes the super-powered Sunwing. By **Keeter, T. Stiles & Pack.** [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

## COMIC ZONE

☐ **BRATTERSKAIN #1 (of 3)** The Celestial Counselor. "So Galactus, tell me about your mother." By **Brian Clopper.** [*B&W comic; $2.75*]

☐ **DAEMON MASK #1 (of 2).** The French Colonial island of Mar-Pei seethes with revolution, a revolution led by The Whisper, a man who wears a mask made out of Human skin. Are you sure his name isn't "Leatherface?" By **Brian Clopper.** [*B&W comic; $2.75*]

☐ **EAGLE: DARK MIRROR SAGA #3 (of 4).**

☐ **ILLUST-RATED CLAS-SEX #3.**

☐ **NIGHTMARE SYNDICATE: THE TREMAYNE HOUSE #1 (of 3).** Horror author Eldridge Tremayne disappeared in 1916, and people have been disappearing ever since. By **Bowman & Szramski.** [*B&W comic; $2.75*]

☐ **PSYCHO KILLERS: CHAINSAW MASSACRE SPECIAL: ED GEIN.** By **Hermon/Timmons.** [*B&W comic; $2.75*]

☐ **SEX IN THE SINEMA #3.**

## COMICO

☐ **ELEMENTALS #26.**

☐ **ELEMENTALS: The Natural Order.** [*Color softcover; $12.95; 160 pages*]

☐ **UNIVERSAL INTERGALACTIC DISCOVERY COMPANY #1** Follow the story of a dog named Ralph and his master as they search for the cosmic messiah. By **Bruce Zick.** *Color comic; $2.50*]

## CONQUEST PRESS

☐ **THE JACK STARJUMPER SUMMER OF '92 ONE SHOT #1.** Space Opera comedy. By **Dennis Stahl.** [*B&W comic; $2.95, $4.95 deluxe*]

☐ **LORELEI OF THE RED MIST #1 (of 2).** Adapting the adventure story by Ray Bradbury and Leigh Brackett. By **C. Marx, Bercasio, & Burcham.** [*B&W comic; $2.95*]

☐ **MS. FANTASTIC #1.** The adult adventures of a sexy female super-heroine. By **Dennis Stahl.** [*B&W comic; $2.95, $4.95 deluxe*]

## CONTINUITY

☐ **CYBERRAD VOL 2 #2** Wins my vote for this year's worst gimmick cover.

## DARK HORSE COMICS

☐ **ALIENS: Genocide #4 (of 4).**

☐ **ALIENS: HIVE #1 (of 4)** A man is asked to design a fake Alien in a scheme to get some Alien Queen Mother royal jelly. Written by **Jerry Prosser.** Art by **Kelley Jones.** [*Color comic; $2.50*]

☐ **CHEVAL NOIR #27.**

☐ **DARK HORSE PRESENTS #59.**

☐ **NEXT MEN #0.** From the pages of *Dark Horse Presents*. The Next Men in color. By **John Byrne.** [*Color comic; $2.50*]

☐ **PREDATOR: Bloody Sands of Time #2 (of 2).** By **Dan Barry** with **Chris Warner.** [*Color comic; $2.50*]

☐ **STAR WARS: DARK EMPIRE #2 (of 6).**

☐ **TALES OF ORDINARY MADNESS #2 (of 4).**

☐ **TERMINATOR: Enemy Within #4 (of 4).** I tell you, if they keep sending people back from the future there won't be anyone left to fight in the future!

☐ **VENUS WARS #11.** By **Yoshikazu Yasuhiko.** [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

☐ **YOUNG INDIANA JONES CHRONICLES: Egypt #1.** Following in the traditions of such greats as *Muppet Babies* and *Tiny Toons* comes *Young Indiana Jones*. Boy I can't wait for Kid Rambo! By **Dan Barry** with **Frank Springer.** [*Color comic; $2.50*]

***Young Indiana Jones* wants his mummy.**

## DC

☐ **ACTION COMICS #675.** [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #489.** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **ANIMAL MAN #46.** Help cast a light on Buddy's disturbed roots. [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **AQUAMAN #5.** A Titans crossover. [*ships 2/20*]

☐ **ARMAGEDDON: Inferno #1 (of 4).** In what seems to be the never-ending series we find Waverider battling aliens out to muck up the time stream. By **Ostrander, Mandrake, & McDonnell.** Future issues will feature Walter Simonson, Arthur Adams, and Timothy Truman. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 2/27*]

☐ **BATMAN #476.** By **Grant & Breyfogle.** [*ships 2/20*]

☐ **BATMAN: GOTHAM KNIGHTS #2 (of 4).** [*ships 2/13*]

☐ **BATMAN: LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #29.** "Faces Part 3" by **Matt Wagner.** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **BATMAN VS. PREDATOR #3 (of 4).** [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **BLACK HOOD #5.** [*ships 2/13*]

☐ **THE BRAVE & THE BOLD #5 (of 6).** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **THE COMET #9.** [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **DEATHSTROKE, THE TERMINATOR #9.** The conclusion of "City of Assassins". [*ships 2/13*]

☐ **THE DEMON #22.** A special issue by **Matt Wagner.** [*ships 2/20*]

☐ **DETECTIVE COMICS #642.** [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **DOCTOR FATE #38.** [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **DOOM PATROL #53.** Dare you Désire the Dashing New Danny's Dream Doom Patrol? Plus Rebis is continuing those immoral acts, on the moon no less. [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **ELONGATED MAN: Europe '92 #4 (of 4).** [*ships 2/13*]

☐ **FLASH #61.** [*ships 2/13*]

☐ **THE FLY #8.** [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **GREEN ARROW #58.** [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **GREEN LANTERN #23.** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **THE GRIFFIN #6 (of 6).** Matt Williams is once again proving that mother is always right and you must clean up your mess. [*ships 2/13*]

☐ **THE HACKER FILES #4.** [*ships 2/7*]

☐ **HAWKWORLD #22.** [*ships 2/13*].

☐ **HELLBLAZER #52.** Part One of a major new storyline, "Royal Blood". [*ships 2/20*]

☐ **JAGUAR #9.** [*ships 2/20*]

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA #61.** The first issue of the new direction for JLA. [*Color comic; 1.00; ships 3/12*]

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE #36.** [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL: The Secret Gospel of Maxwell Lord.** Collects *Justice League* #8-12 and the first annual. By **Giffen & DeMatteis, Maguire, Willingham, Gordon & various.** [*Color softcover; $12.95; 144 pages; ships 2/13*]

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE SPECTACULAR #1.** Here it is out of the ashes of the old comes *The Justice League*! (hey wasn't that in *Legends* #6?). By **Jurgens & various.** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **LEGEND OF THE SHIELD #10.** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **L.E.G.I.O.N. '92 #38.** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #28.** Spotlight on Dirk Morgana. Also Bridging the Five Year Gap! [*ships 2/20*]

☐ **MS. TREE QUARTERLY #8.** In DC's ongoing purge of Quarterly titles this is Ms. Tree's last issue. She will now have a summer special to be followed by yearly annuals. What can I say—Ms. Tree is left (appropriately) knocked up and out of luck.

☐ **MY NAME IS CHAOS #2 (of 4).** Tom Veitch manages to use the same plot again (*Nazz, Clash*) yet come up with a different story. By **T. Veitch & Ridgway.** [*Color comic; $4.95; ships 2/6*]

☐ **NEW TITANS #85.** The Stunning epilogue to *Titans Hunt*. Look for Teen (or Team?) Titans premiering next year! [*ships 2/20*]

☐ **OUTLAWS #8 (of 8).** [*ships 2/20*]

☐ **RAGMAN #7 (of 8).** [*ships 2/13*]

☐ **THE RAY #3 (of 6).** [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 2/27*]

☐ **SANDMAN #37.** The conclusion of "A Game of You." [*ships 2/20*]

☐ **SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN #22.** "The Road" Part 3 by **Milligan and McCarthy.** [*ships 2/13*]

☐ **SHADO: Song of the Dragon #2 (of 4).** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **SKULL & BONES #2 (of 3).** [*ships 2/12*]

☐ **STARMAN #45.** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **STAR TREK #30.** "Veritas Part One." A peaceful leave is shattered when Sulu and Uhura witness a random act of violence. By **Weinstein, Purcell & Frye.** [*Color comic; $1.75; ships 2/13*]

☐ **STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION #30.** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **SUICIDE SQUAD #63.** [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **SUPERMAN #66.** [*ships 2/20*]

☐ **SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL #10.** A member of Superman's strike force is killed when Brainiac attacks. [*Color*

*comic; $1.00; ships 2/13*]

☐ **SWAMP THING #118.** [*ships 2/27*]

☐ **WARLORD #3 (of 6).** [*ships 2/6*]

☐ **THE WEB #8.** [*ships 2/13*]

### PIRANHA PRESS

☐ **BEAUTIFUL STORIES FOR UGLY CHILDREN #26.**

### DEADLINE

☐ **DEADLINE #37.**

### DISNEY

☐ **DISNEY ADVENTURES DIGEST #18.**

☐ **DISNEY'S COLOSSAL COLLECTION #3.**

☐ **DONALD DUCK #24.** By **Don Rosa**. [*Color comic; $1.50*]

☐ **LITTLE MERMAID #4.** Written by **Peter** (*The Hulk*) **David.**

☐ **UNCLE SCROOGE #266.**

☐ **WALT DISNEY'S COMICS & STORIES #571.** A 64-page Giant with: *Atom Bomb*, a Carl Barks Cheerios giveaway, and from the pages of *Alice in Wonderland*, "The Unbirthday Party," and others. [*Color comic; $2.95*]

***Waldo* lives it up at Fantagraphics.**

### DOUBLE EDGE

☐ **TIME GATES #5.** Our heroes are transported to another time. [*B&W comic; $1.95*]

### DRAWN & QUARTERLY

☐ **DIRTY PLOTTE #5.** Cover parody of Eros Comix' *Wendy Whitebread*. By **Julie Doucet**. [*B&W comic; $2.50; 24 pages*]

☐ **PEEP SHOW #1.** Because you asked for it. **Joe Matt**'s regular new series. [*B&W comic; $2.50; 24 pages*]

### DYNAMIC PUBLISHING

☐ **GALAXY GIRL #3.**

### ECLIPSE

☐ **KRAZY & IGNATZ Volume 9.** By **George Herriman.**

☐ **MAD DOGS #1.** Police brutality goes one step further in this 3-issue series of Bad ex-cops. By **C. Dixon & Toppi**. [*B&W comic; $2.50; 32 pages*]

☐ **MIRACLEMAN: The Apocrypha #3 (of 3).**

☐ **ONE MILE UP #2.**

☐ **TALES OF THE BEANWORLD #20.**

### FANTACO

☐ **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD: THE PRIVATE FILES.** A look behind the making of the *Night of the Living Dead Comic*. [*B&W comic; $3.95*]

☐ **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD #2: Hardcover edition.**

☐ **NIGHT'S CHILDREN #1.**

### FANTAGOR

☐ **DEN 3: Children of Fire.** Collects *Den* #8-10. By **Richard Corben.** [*Color softcover; $14.95; 80 pages*]

### FANTAGRAPHICS

☐ **ADVENTURES ON THE FRINGE #2.**

☐ **ALL WALDO COMICS.** Collects the stories of Waldo, **Kim Deitch**'s satirical homage to the cartoons of the '20s and '30s. [*B&W softcover; $7.95; 68 pages*]

☐ **ANA Signed & Numbered Edition.** By **Gabriel & F. Solano Lopez.** [*B&W hardcover; $35.95; 112 pages*]

☐ **BLEEDING HEART #2.**

☐ **CARTOONS OF THE ROARING TWENTIES Volume 2.** By **various.** [*B&W softcover; $8.95; 64 pages*]

☐ **COMPLETE CRUMB COMICS Volume 8.** Featuring "The Death of Fritz the Cat." By **Robert Crumb.** [*B&W book; $16.95 softcover, $39.95 hardcover, $75.00 signed & numbered; 132 pages*]

☐ **LOVE & ROCKETS BONANZA #1** 2nd Printing.

☐ **NEAT STUFF #4.** Second Printing.

☐ **PERRAMUS #3.** Perramus and his cohorts battle to save the city's soul. A mystery-thriller, rendered in subtle gray tones.

☐ **REAL STUFF #6.**

☐ **SAP TUNES #2.**

### EROS COMIX

☐ **ALIEN SEX MONSTER LUST.** Sometimes I think these names are written by a machine. By **Bruce Patterson.** [*B&W comic; $2.50; 24 pages*]

☐ **IRONWOOD #10.** The penultimate issue of **Bill Willingham**'s sex/adventure/fantasy/humor/whatever series. [*B&W comic; $2.50; 24 pages*]

☐ **LURID TALES #1.** Parody of '40s jungle girl heroines. [*B&W comic; $2.50; 24 pages*]

☐ **ONE HUNDRED DEGREES IN THE SHADE #1 (of 4).** And two hundred and fifty cents on the counter. Steamy pot boiler by **Lake & Wetherell.** [*B&W comic; $2.50; 24 pages*]

☐ **TALK DIRTY #1.**

☐ **WOOFERS & HOOTERS #1.** Shooty Beagle returns. By **Budgett, Dumm & Zabel.** [*B&W comic; $2.75; 32 pages*]





### MONSTER COMICS

☐ **THE HOLO BROTHERS #10 (of 10).** The slam-bang finale called "Meet the New Boss." By **Jim Rohn**. [*B&W comic; $2.25*]

☐ **RAZORGUTS #3.**

☐ **SHE BUCCANEER #1 (of 2).** High seas adventure with a twist, with a female pirate sporting twin Jolly Rogers! And they've got a lot to be jolly about! By **Bill Hughes**. [*B&W comic; $2.25*]

### FATE COMICS

☐ **ROCKIN' ROLLIN' MINER ANTS #1.** Ever read one of those titles in which you lose interest after the first syllable?

### FATHOM PRESS

☐ **BLOOD REIGN #5.** The origin of the Blood Reign. By **Tim Tyler.** [*B&W comic; $2.95; 32 pages*]

### FELIX COMICS INC

☐ **CAMPFIRE STORIES #1.** *The Monkey's Paw, The Savage Hook, The Boy in the Painting*, and others are brought to you in this new anthology series. By **Don Ariola**, son of Gus, and **various**. [*Color comic; $2.25; 32 pages*]

☐ **JOHNNY YOUNGBLOOD, THE TRACKER #1.** A Comanche Indian must track his brother's killer into the "Big City." By **Oriolo, Crane, & Chiaritto**. [*B&W comic; $3.50; 48 pages*]

☐ **NEW ADVENTURES OF FELIX THE CAT #1.** Felix returns! In the first original art in over 20 years. By **Ariola, Brown & Calaguire**. [*Color comic; $2.25; 32 pages*]

### FIVE STAR COMICS

☐ **THE ORIGINAL OLIVIA #2.**

### FLEETWAY

☐ **2000 AD #772-775.** Featuring Judge Dredd. By **various**. [*Color comics; $2.95 each*]

### FLEETWAY/QUALITY

☐ **CYBERCRUSH: ROBOTS IN REVOLT #6.**

☐ **DARE THE IMPOSSIBLE #3.**

☐ **DREDD RULES! #5.**

☐ **JUDGE DREDD CLASSICS #64.**

☐ **NECROPOLIS #2 (of 12).** Judge Dredd, Judge Death, and more! Enter the *Necropolis*.

☐ **ROGUE TROOPER #2.**

### FORBIDDEN FRUIT

☐ **THE ADVENTURES OF MISTY #9.**

☐ **CASE MORGAN #9.**

☐ **METALLICA #3.**

☐ **MIRANDA THE TEASE #1.** Miranda Tease—the best-dressed secret agent in America. Or is it undressed? By **Miss Mercy.** [*B&W comic; $2.95*]

☐ **SPACED OUT! #1.** Outer space sex by **Don Lomax.** [*B&W comic; $2.95*]

### FRIENDLY/PERSONALITY

### BEST COMICS

☐ **RESCUEMAN #4.**

### CELEBRITY COMICS

☐ **KIRK VS. PICARD #1 (of 2).** Comparison of the two fictional Starship captains. [*Color comic; $5.95*]

### FRIENDLY COMICS

☐ **BAMBI THE HUNTER #2 (of 5).**

☐ **LEATHER & LACE: Undercover #2 (of 5).**

☐ **SAPPHIRE: City of Sin #2 (of 4).**

☐ **VAMPIRE'S KISS: The First Evil #2 (of 4).**

☐ **XXX-WOMEN: Clash of the XXX's #2 (of 3).**

### PERSONALITY COMICS

☐ **BASEBALL SLUGGERS #2 (of 4): Dave Justice.** [*B&W comic; $2.95*]

☐ **BEATLES #4 (of 4): Ringo Starr.**

☐ **LED ZEPPELIN #1 (of 4).** [*B&W comic; $2.95*]

☐ **NEW CREW #5: Denise Crosby.**

☐ **ORIGINAL CREW #5: George Takei.**

### HUMOR COMICS

☐ **HUMOR COMICS PRESENTS: BIG BERD VS. ARNOLD SCHWARZENHEIMER #1.** Be afraid. Be very afraid. [*B&W comic; $2.95*]

### GLADSTONE/DISNEY

☐ **CARL BARKS LIBRARY ALBUM #2.** [*Color softcover; $8.95*]

### GREATER MERCURY

☐ **GRIPS SPECIAL #1.**

☐ **I COME IN PEACE #2 (of 2).** Adapting the new B-grade Sci-Fi flick soon to be on video. By **Holland & Cobbs**. [*Color comic; $2.50*]

### HAMILTON COMICS

☐ **MAGGOTS #4.**

☐ **MAGGOTS IN COLOR #1.** By **Wayne & Stiles** & **various**. [*Color comic; $1.00; 32 pages*]

### HARVEY COMICS

☐ **ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS #1.** [*Color comic; $1.25*]

☐ **BABY HUEY BIG BOOK #1.** [*Color comic; $2.25*]

☐ **BABY HUEY DIGEST #1.** [*Color digest; $1.75*]

☐ **BACK TO THE FUTURE #4.**

☐ **CASPER #8.**

☐ **FELIX THE CAT #5.**

☐ **HOT STUFF #4.**

☐ **MUPPET BABIES #1.** By **Stan Kaye & Marie Severin**. [*Color comic; $1.25*]

☐ **RICHIE RICH #8.**

☐ **RICHIE RICH DIGEST #34.**

☐ **TOM & JERRY #5.**

☐ **WOODY WOODPECKER #5.**

☐ **WOODY WOODPECKER DIGEST #1.** By **Walter Lantz**. Right. [*Color comic; $1.75; 96 pages*]

### HELPLESS AVENGER

☐ **TERRORESS #3.**

### HERO GRAPHICS

☐ **CHAMPIONS CLASSICS #3.**

☐ **THE COMING OF APHRODITE #1.** Sexual politics and intrigue in the days of the Titans of Greek mythology. The publisher says it's the best thing from the company yet. By **Mallonee & E. R. Cruz**. [*B&W comic; $3.95; 52 pages*]

☐ **FLARE ADVENTURES #3.**

### INNOVATION

☐ **FORBIDDEN PLANET#1 (of 4).**

☐ **LOST IN SPACE #7.**

☐ **NIGHTMARES ON ELM STREET #6.**

☐ **QUEEN OF THE DAMNED #3.**

☐ **SHADOW OF THE TORTURER #4.**

☐ **VIGIL: FALL FROM GRACE #1.** Grace isn't a vampire—she's just a little under the weather. Just ask her. By **Loudermilk & Iverson**. [*B&W comic; $2.75; 52 pages*]

**From *Vigil*: "Vampirism—It's a living."**

## IMPELLING IDEAS

☐ **ESTATE POLICE #1.** A special team of future police charged with protecting the public—at any cost! By **Silva & Zale.** [*B&W comic; $2.25*]

## J2

☐ **HEAVY METAL: March.**
☐ **NATIONAL LAMPOON: April.**

## JADEMAN

☐ **BLOOD SWORD #44.**
☐ **BLOOD SWORD DYNASTY #31.**
☐ **DRUNKEN FIST #44.**
☐ **FORCE OF BUDDHA'S PALM #44.**
☐ **IRON MARSHAL #21.**
☐ **ORIENTAL HEROES #44**

## JAL PUBLICATIONS

☐ **STRIP ADVENTURE #4.**

## JOHN BROWN

☐ **VIZ #52.**
☐ **FORTEAN TIMES #62.**

## JQ PRODUCTIONS

☐ **JAM QUACKY #2.**

## KAMITE

☐ **NUMIDIAN FORCE #7.**

## KITCHEN SINK PRESS

☐ **MELODY #7.**
☐ **OMAHA #17.**

## KNOCKABOUT

☐ **FANNY: VOYEUSE-WOMAN VIEW SEX #2.**

## LEADSLINGER COMICS

☐ **BOB 'N' DAVE #2.**

## MAD

☐ **MAD SUPER SPECIAL #83.**

## LUNATIC FRINGE

☐ **BLOODEYE: THE ADVENTURES OF SHARON BLOODEYE/THE SORE THUMB #3**
☐ **SWORDS OF THE ICE QUEEN #2**

## M-PRINT GRAPHICS

☐ **CREATURE FEATURE #2.**

## MAGNUM COMICS

☐ **BROOKS ROBINSON #2 of 3.**
☐ **DUKE SNIDER #2 of 3.**
☐ **LOU GEHRIG #1**

## MALIBU

### ADVENTURE

☐ **ALIEN NATION: Public Enemy #3 (of 4).**
☐ **BLOOD OF THE APES #4 (of 4).**
☐ **LOVECRAFT #2 (of 4).**
☐ **PARANOIA #3 (of 6).** Based on the West End game.
☐ **PLANET OF THE APES #21.** *The Terror Beneath* (Part 1 of 4). From mankind's past comes the spirit of the evil Governor Breck, the head of Ape Management from *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes*. Resurrected by mutant humans, he leads a Jihad against all apekind. Features the deaths of several major characters [*B&W comic; $2.50*]
☐ **ROCKET RANGER #3 (of 6).**
☐ **ROGER WILCO #1 (of 6).** Roger Wilco, galaxy-saving Janitor. Based on the Computer Game. [*Color comic; $2.95*]
☐ **TORG: Reality Storm! #1 (of 4).** Based on the West End Game. [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

### AIRCEL

☐ **THE CLIMAXX COLLECTION.** The super-heroine wank book is collected. By **Barry Blair.** [*Color comic; $12.95*]
☐ **DEBBIE DOES COMIX #1 (of 3).** Debbie shows up at a comic book convention In your dreams. By **R. A. Jones & Clark.** [*B&W comic; $2.95*]
☐ **GALAXINA #3 (of 4).**

### ETERNITY

☐ **DEMONIC TOYS #2 (of 4)**
☐ **ELIMINATOR #2 (of 3).**
☐ **EVIL ERNIE #3 (of 5).**
☐ **HOLIDAY FOR SCREAMS.** Horror by **Harry Hoggard, George E. Turner** and others [*B&W softcover; $4.95; 56 pages*]
☐ **SOUTHERN SQUADRON: Freedom of Information Act #2**

### MALIBU COMICS

☐ **YOUNGBLOOD #1 (of 3).** A world in which super-heroes are superstars. The much talked about solo project of **Rob Liefeld** is here. But what we really want to know is, "Hey, Rob is your fly buttoned?" And where's Spike Man? [*Color comic; $2.50*]

## MARVEL

☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #107.** Team-up with X-Factor [*ship 2/11*]
☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #361.** [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **AVENGERS #346.** Chapter 12 of the 19-part "Operation Galactic Storm" [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **AVENGERS WEST COAST#81.** Chapter 9 of the 19-part "Operation Galactic Storm." By **R. Thomas, Rose, & Dzon.** [*Color comic; $1.25; ships 2/4*]
☐ **BARBIE #16.** [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **BARBIE FASHION #16.** [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT COMIC BOOK #5** [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **CAGE #1.** The Mighty Marvel Revival Machine marches on this time with Luke Cage. Now a somewhat bitter lonely man he works out of a sleazy Chicago newspaper with Dakota North. Now that *Cage* is here can *Iron Fist* be far behind (With Byrne we hope)? By **McLaurin, Turner & Ivy.** [*Color comic; $1.50; ships 2/4*]
☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #399.** Chapter 8 of the 19-part "Operation Galactic Storm". [*ships 2/4*]
☐ **CAPTAIN PLANET #7 (of 12).** [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #255.** [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **CONAN SAGA #61.** [*B&W magazine, $2.25; ships 2/25*]
☐ **DAREDEVIL #303.** [*ships 2/4*]
☐ **DARKHAWK #14.** "Heart of the Hawk" Part 5 of 6. [*ships 2/4*]
☐ **DEATH'S HEAD II #2.** By **Abnett, Sharp, & Lanning.** [*Color comic; $1.75; ships 2/18*]
☐ **DEATHLOK #11.** Guest-starring Ghost Rider. [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **DEFENDERS OF DYNATRON CITY #3 (of 6).** [*Color comic; $1.25, ships 2/25*]
☐ **DOCTOR STRANGE #40.** "Fear Lords Epic" 3 of 4. By **Thomas & Isherwood.** [*Color comic; $1.25; ships 2/25*]
☐ **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE #183.** [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **EXCALIBUR #49.** [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #363.** [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **GHOST RIDER #24.** Coming soon: "Rise of the Midnight Sons" and a new Ghost Rider title, *Spirits of Vengeance*, co-starring Johnny Blaze. [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **G.I. JOE #123.** [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY: The Quest for the Shield.** The first six issues of the new *GOTG* series, in which the future heroes search for the shield of Captain America. By **Valentino & Montano.** [*Color softcover; $12.95; 144 pages; ships 2/4*]
☐ **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #23.** [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #392.** "War and Pieces" 3 of 3. Guest starring X-Factor. By **David & Keown.** [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **IRON MAN #279.** Chapter 13 in the 19-part "Operation Galactic Storm" [*ships 2/25*]





☐ **JAMES BOND, JR. #4.** [*ship 2/25*]
☐ **KID 'N PLAY #3.** *ship 2/25*]
☐ **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #99 & 100.** Issue #100 features a special feature length story starring the Ghost Rider, Wolverine, Doctor Doom, and Nightmare. By **Mackie & Kieth.** [*Color comics; $1.50 each; ship 2/4 & 2/18*]
☐ **MARVEL SUPER HEROES SPECIAL #9** [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **MARVEL TALES #260.** Reprints *Amazing Spider-Man* #250 by **Stern, Romita, Jr. & Janson.** [*Color comic; $1.25; ships 2/18*]
☐ **MARVEL UNIVERSE—MASTER EDITION #17.** [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **MOON KNIGHT #37** "Blood Brothers" 3 of 4. [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **THE 'NAM #67.** Start of a three part storyline starring The Punisher. Why don't you just forget about it guys? [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **NAMOR THE SUB-MARINER #25** [*ships 2/4*]
☐ **NEW WARRIORS #22.** "Nothing But the Truth" 1 of 4. Vance goes on trial for the murder of his father. [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **NFL SUPERPRO #7.** [*ships 2/4*]
☐ **THE PIRATES OF DARK WATER #6 (of 9).** [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **PUNISHER #62.** [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **PUNISHER ARMORY #3.** [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **PUNISHER: G-FORCE.** [*Color comic, $4.95; ships 2/11*].
☐ **PUNISHER WAR ZONE #2.** "Ladder of Death" 2 of 6. [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #41.** [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **QUASAR #33** Chapter 10 of the 19-part "Operation Galactic Storm". [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **QUASAR SPECIAL #2** It's really *Quasar* #33, but renumbered for the newsstand market. [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #196.** [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **SHE-HULK #38.** [*ships 2/4*]
**S.H.I.E.L.D. #34.** [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **SILVER SURFER #64.** [*ship 2/25*]
☐ **SIMPSONS 1992 ANNUAL.** The Simpsons 3-D. I tell you, not much is more frightening. By **Matt Groening & slaves** [*Color $2.95; ships 2/25*]
☐ **SLEEPWALKER #11** [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #187.** "Funeral Arrangements" 2 of 3. [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **SPIDER-MAN #21.** To boost Larsen's (ahem) writing are guest stars galore. Deathlok, Hulk, Solo, and Ghost Rider. (Huh, I guess Punisher and Wolverine were busy.) In "Revenge of the Sinister Six" 4 of 6 By **Erik Larsen** [*Color comic; $1.75, ships 2/18*]
☐ **SPIDER-MAN: Fear Itself** [*Color softcover; $12.95; ships 2/18*]
☐ **THE THING #1 (of 4).** Reprinting stories from *Marvel Two-in-One*, a move that, of course, has *nothing* to do with Dark Horse releasing its own "Thing" comic book. By **Gerber, S. Buscema, & Esposito.** [*Color comic; $1 25, ships 2/11*].
☐ **THOR #446.** Chapter 14 of the 19-part "Operation Galactic Storm" [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **UNCANNY X-MEN #287.** [*ships 2/4*]
**WARLOCK AND THE INFINITY WATCH #3.** Good stuff from the master Jim Starlin. Adam goes to visit his foster-father, The High Evolutionary. [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #87.** "The Name of the Rose," 4 of 6 [*ships 2/4*]
☐ **WHAT IF? #36** "Time Quake" 2 of 5. The Cosmic Avengers vs. The Guardians of the Galaxy. [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **WOLVERINE #53** [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **WONDER MAN #8.** Chapter 11 of the 19-part "Operation Galactic Storm"[*ships 2/11*]
☐ **WORLD CHAMIONSHIP WRESTLING #1.** Sting, El Gigante, and other heroes bring a dash of realism to comics. By **Lackey, Wilson & ?** [*Color comic; $1.25; ships 2/4*]
**X-FACTOR #77.** [*ships 2/18*]
**X-FORCE #9.** [*ships 2/25*]
**X-MEN #7.** [*ships 2/18*]
**X-MEN CLASSIC #70.** Special double-sized reprinting of *Uncanny X-Men* #70, in which the X-men finally free themselves of the Brood's influence. By **Claremont, P. Smith & Wiacek.** [*Color comic; $1.75, ships 2/25*]
☐ **YUPPIES FROM HELL #3**

### EPIC

☐ **AKIRA #35.** This is it. The final stretch to the last issue #37. Followed by two bonus issues full of additional material [*ships 2/18*]
☐ **DREADLANDS #4 (of 4).** [*ships 2/25*]
☐ **THE GROO CARNIVAL.** Collects issues #9-12 by **Sergio & Mark.** [*Color softcover, $8.95; ships 2/11*]
☐ **GROO THE WANDERER #88** [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **HELLRAISER #12.** [*ships 2/11*]
☐ **IDOL #2.** [*ships 2/18*]

**Midnight Comics' *Christopher Columbus*—Don't give away the ending.**

## MIDNIGHT COMICS

☐ **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS #1 (of 12).** As he sailed the unknown waters of the Atlantic, all he could think of was, "Maybe, 499 years from now, this will be made into a comic book." By **Berryman & Dace.** [*B&W comic; $2.25*]
☐ **MOGOBI DESERT RATS #4.**

## MILLENIUM PUBLISHING

☐ **H. P. LOVECRAFT'S CTHULHU #3.**

## MILLER PUBLISHING

☐ **TRIAL RUN #6.** [*B&W comic; 2.00*]

## MIRAGE STUDIOS

☐ **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #44.**
☐ **TURTLE SOUP #4 (of 4).**

## MISTER PLANET

☐ **MEET MISTER PLANET** [*B&W $10.00*].
☐ **MISTER PLANET #8.**
☐ **WEST HELL #1.** [*B&W comic; $3.25*]

## MOCKING BIRD STUDIOS

☐ **THE ACE OF SPADES #1.** In a sort-of Medieval world, the cruel King Viktor is opposed by the masked hero known as The Ace of Spades. By **George Davis.** [*B&W comic; $2.50*]
☐ **THE DREAM #2.**

Ben Edlund borrows from Federico Fellini.

### MODERN KNIGHTS COMICS

☐ **GEE DIADEE JOEL AND THE INFANT BRIDADE #2.**

☐ **ICESTORM #2.**

☐ **LAVA KNIGHT #3.**

☐ **SOUL WARRIOR #3.**

### M-PRINT GRAPHICS

☐ **CREATURE FEATURES #2.**

### MULEHIDE GRAPHICS

☐ **I, LUSIPHUR #2.**

### MU PRESS

☐ **DESERT PEACH #15.** It's troubles among the pilots in a story plotted by **Steve Gallacci.** By **Donna Barr.** [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

☐ **WILD KINGDOM #1.** Anthropomorphic sex by **Doug Rice** and **various.** [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

☐ **ZU #1.** By **Steve Gallacci, Roberta Gregory** and **various.** [*B&W comic, $3.95*]

### NBM

☐ **TERRY & THE PIRATES #23: 1945-1946.** [*B&W softcover; $6.95; 64 pages*]

☐ **ULYSSES VOLUME 2.** By **George Pichard.** [*B&W softcover; $9.95; 64 pages*]

### NEW ENGLAND COMICS

☐ **ROCKIN' BONES #2.**

☐ **TALES TO TERRIBLE TO TELL #5.** Featuring pre-Code horror. [*B&W comic; $3.50; 64 pages*]

☐ **THE COLLECTED PAUL THE SAMURAI** Collects the first three issues by **Ben Edlund & Dave Garcia.** [*B&W comic; $8.95; 96 pages*]

☐ **ROCKIN' BONES #2.**

☐ **TICK'S GIANT CIRCUS OF THE MIGHTY #1.** *The Marvel Universe,* Tick style. By **Ben Edlund & various.** [*Color comic; $2.75; 32 pages*]

☐ **THE TICK OMNIBUS II: Thursdays Ad Infinitum.** Issues #7-10 by **Ben Edlund & Dave Garcia.** [*B&W softcover; $10.95; 120 pages*]

### NIGHTSWORD PUBLISHING

☐ **BLUE KNIGHTS 2025 #1.**

☐ **FIX #1.**

☐ **JUSTICE AGENDA #1 (of 4).** Vigilante hero. [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

☐ **SCIENCE FICTION HEROES #1.**

☐ **SHADOW WING #1.** A star-spanning smuggler's war. [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

### NIGHT WYND ENTERPRISES

☐ **DRAGONFIRE #3 (of 4).**

☐ **ELFHEIM: VOLUME II #1 (of 4).** Hawk and company prepare a full-scale attack on the magical Ichi. By **Barry Blair.** [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

☐ **ELFLORE #1 (of 4).** Purebreeze and Falcon are caught up in a war between two wizards. By **Barry Blair.** [*B&W comic; $2.50*]

☐ **FOXFIRE #1 (of 3).**

☐ **SERPENTYNE #1 (of 3).** Hotachi Kimura of *Samurai* and Troy Adams of *China Sea* team up against the "Serpent Woman." [*B&W comic, $2.50*]

☐ **STRATONAUT #4 (of 4).**

### NORTHSTAR

☐ **KLOWNSHOCK #2.**

☐ **TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE #1.** The famous splatter movie comes to Northstar. It's morning in America. By **N. Trais & J. J. Birch.** [*Color comic; $2.75; 32 pages*]

☐ **THE RETURN OF AMY PAPUDA #1.** She'ssss Baaaack! Ugly Amy strikes it rich. By **Michael Pearlstein.** [*B&W comic; $2.75*]

### NOW COMICS

☐ **GREEN HORNET #8.**

☐ **MARRIED: WITH CHILDREN #8.**

☐ **REAL GHOSTBUSTERS #6.**

☐ **TALES OF THE GREEN HORNET #4.**

☐ **TWILIGHT ZONE #6.**

### NO ZONE

☐ **NOZONE #3**

### PAGE ONE, INC

☐ **COMIC RELIEF #34.**

### PALLIARD PRESS

☐ **XXXENOPHILE #6.**

### RANDOM HOUSE

☐ **GARFIELD BY THE POUND.** It's this really fat cat, see? Only it eats lasagna! Cutting edge humor from **Jim Davis.** [*B&W softcover, $6.95; 128 pages*]

### REBEL STUDIOS

☐ **DARKSTAR #3.**

### RECO COMICS

☐ **PROTECTOR #1.**

### REVOLUTIONARY COMICS

☐ **BASEBALL LEGENDS #2: Ty Cobb.**

☐ **BASEBALL SUPERSTARS #4: Pete Rose.**

☐ **CONTEMPORARY BIO-GRAPHICS #2: Boris Yeltsin.** Not exactly what I thought they'd follow their Stan Lee Bio with.

☐ **HARD ROCK COMICS: MOTLEY CRUE #2.**





☐ **ROCK N' ROLL COMICS: GRATEFUL DEAD #46.**

☐ **SPORTS SUPERSTARS: MICHAEL JORDAN #1.**

☐ **STAR JAM COMICS: HAMMER #1.**

### RIP OFF PRESS

☐ **LIPSTICK #2.**

☐ **NUT RUNNERS #4.**

☐ **POST BROS. #24.**

☐ **RENEGADE #3.**

### ROCKET COMICS

☐ **TIME CITY #1.**

### SIDESHOW

☐ **BIG LOU #1.**

### SLAVE LABOR

☐ **BLOOD AND WATER #2 (of 3).**

☐ **OBLIVION CITY #1** Second Printing.

### 3-D ZONE

☐ **DRACULA IN 3-D #1.** My name is Dracula (thrusts arms forward), Blah, blah (sticks out tongue, bobs head). [*3-D comic; $3.95; 25 pages*]

☐ **ZOMBIE IN 3-D #1.** By **Robert Williams & various.** [*3-D comic; $3.95; 24 pages*]

### TRAGEDY STRIKES PRESS

☐ **REACTOR GIRL #2.**

### TUNDRA

☐ **THE JAM #2.**

☐ **NO GUTS OR GLORY**

☐ **SKULL FARMER: TUNDRA SKETCHBOOK VOLUME #10.** Visual weirdness from **Paul Mavrides.** [*Color & B&W comic; $4.95; 48 pages*]

### UNDERGROUND COMICS

☐ **OMEGA KNIGHTS #3.**

### UNGAWA

☐ **UNGAWA #3-4.**

### VALIANT/VOYAGER

☐ **BEST OF TUROK, SON OF STONE VOLUME 2.** The stone age adventures of Turok, an Indian trapped in a land of dinosaurs. Original Gold Key stories illustrated by **Alberto Giolettl.** [*Color comic; $4.95; 48 pages*]

☐ **HARBINGER #5.**

☐ **MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER #12**

☐ **RAI #3.**

☐ **SHADOWMAN #1.** Oooh scary. Valiant's avenger of the night. By **Steve Englehart & Lapham.** [*Color comic; $2.50*]

☐ **SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM #9.**

☐ **WWF BATTLEMANIA #9.**

☐ **X—O MANOWAR #4.**

### VISUAL IMAGINATION

**SPACE JUNK #3.**

### VIZ COMICS

☐ **CRYING FREEMAN: BOOK III #10 (of 10).** The dramatic conclusion. By **Koike & Ikegami.** [*Color comic; $4.95; 40 pages*]

☐ **MIDNIGHT EYE #6 (of 6).**

☐ **MIDNIGHT EYE: Goku Moonlight Scope Hardcover.** By **Buichi Terasawa.** [*Color hardcover; $39.95; 70 pages*]

☐ **SILENT MOBIUS: PART II #3 (of 5).**

### VORTEX

☐ **LEGENDS OF NASCAR: TALLADEFA STORY #10.**

☐ **NASCAR ADVENTURES: ERNIE IRVAN #5.**

☐ **LEGENDS OF NASCAR #2: Error Hologram Issue.** Vortex tells us that this issue is worth more because of an error with the placement of the hologram. Future collectible editions include: *Missing Cover Issue, Incorrectly Placed Staples Issue,* and *Taken Out Back and Stomped on in the Mud Issue*

### WARNER BOOKS

☐ **ENEMY ACE: WAR IDYLL.** By **George Pratt.** [*Color softcover; $14.99; 128 pages*]

### X PRESS INK

☐ **MANTAMAN #1, 2 & 3.**

### ZEN

☐ **ZEN, INTERGALATIC NINJA #5.** Featuring the art of **Jim Fletcher & Jim Fern.** [*B&W comic; $32 pages*]

Some pictures don't need captions.

# Invite 13 blood-thirsty Demons into your home!

Demons are fun! Demons are exciting! Demons are beautiful (just ask them)!
And with only a few minor precautions they won't shred your cat or make your head spin around.
**Artists' Asylum Press** presents the **1992 All-Demon Calendar!**

**13 months of evil** as rendered by **13** different artists including: **Phil Foglio & Roberta Gregory.** The front and back covers (seen below in T-shirt form) are hand-pulled silk-screens; silver on black. The interior is printed in black on light-gray paper. It has 28 pages at 8 1/2" x 11" and sells for $6.66.

**Still available**: the 1991 Artists' Asylum Fantasy Calendar with **Donna Barr & Roberta Gregory** for just $3.50. It's not an obsolete calendar, its an *Art Portfolio.*

**Must** be 18 or older to purchase! Pentagram not included.

**Perfect for school or church,** these shirts are 100% cotton, printed with T-shirt ink that's guaranteed not to wash out. Available in silver or gold on black, in large or extra-large for $13.00.

Art by Tom Milliorn

Art by Phil Foglio

**Yes!** Please send me the:

___ 1992 Artists' Asylum All-demon calendar
___ 1991 Artists' Asylum Fantasy calendar
___ P. Foglio T-shirt; silver ink; size_____
___ P. Foglio T-shirt; gold ink; size_____
___ T. Milliorn T-shirt; silver ink; size_____
___ T. Milliorn T-shirt; gold ink; size_____

Name_____
Address_____
City_____
State_____ Zip_____
Country_____

I've enclosed a check or money order made out to **Artists' Asylum Press,** (all prices include postage).

**Please send to:** Artists' Asylum Press P.O. Box 45088 Seattle, WA 98145 **Thanks for your order!**

# "Anyone Except The Hulk"

## an essay by Peter David

There is the quote. The "Famous Last Words." They mean nothing without the context, however, so—the context:

It is hard for me to believe as I sit here with deadlines up to my butt and my message machine filled with recorded missives from editors wondering when I'm going to have the next plot in for whichever comic book I'm presently on, that there was once a time when I was between assignments.

I had, to all intents and purposes, left my first and only writing assignment for Marvel, *Spectacular Spider-Man*. There were no other titles open. Editors were, by and large, still rather suspicious of me since I was the Marvel Direct Sales Manager, and no one from the business side of Marvel had ever done any sort of writing for the editorial side. It was one of these things that Just Wasn't Done, and my brief (and unexpectedly popular) tenure on Spidey was regarded as something of a fluke, even a dangerous precedent. So no one was rushing to give me any other work fro the same reason that, when I was a kid, the teacher instructed the children not to laugh at my jokes: it was not considered proper to encourage me.



At the same time I was wondering whether I would, indeed, ever have another writing assignment. I was perfectly happy sticking with my sales position, but still, there had been something of a charge out of playing with the characters in the Marvel Universe. And I discussed the situation with my wife, Myra, and she said to me, "What characters would you be interested in writing? If you had your choice, who would you want to write?"

And I thought about that for a moment. And I said:

"Anyone except the Hulk."

It was an understandable statement. The Hulk was dumb, green and monosyllabic. The sales on his book had been flatlined for several years. He was dull and uninteresting to me. At best, he was a power fantasy for depressed ten year olds . . . especially ten year olds who felt, rightly or wrongly, that they were stupid . . . because here was a being that could beat up anyone or anything, and his lack of intelligence was irrelevant. It was even a plus, because he was too dense to know when he was outmatched.

But I didn't have those power fantasies. Furthermore, as a writer, my greatest strength lies in dialogue. Writing a character with a 20-word vocabulary and no grasp of concepts like personal pronouns . . . forget it.

This was before some changes were made.

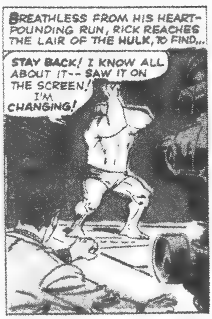
John Byrne, apparently not sharing my disdain for the character, took over The Incredible Hulk for a six-issue run that gave the series its first major sales jolt in years. While it was technically proficient, I was annoyed at Byrne's sudden, convenient separating of the Hulk and Banner. The subsequent stories, with the dedicated scientist and his band pursuing a rampaging, wordless green monster—well, it didn't seem remotely like the Hulk to me. There was none of the inner personality conflict that had been the character's personal signature. You could just as easily have substituted Godzilla for the Hulk and done basically the same stories.

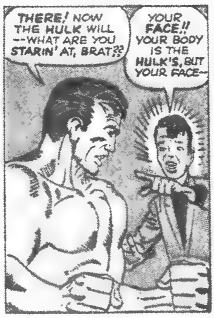
After Byrne's departure came the arrival of one of the most genuinely nice guys in comic books: Al Milgrom. (If you're in a bad mood, spend five minutes locked in a room with Al Milgrom and Walt Simonson. The combined ambient niceness will leave you about as hostile as a Care Bear.)

Al, apparently as jazzed with John's changes as I was, did away with the split Banner and Hulk almost as quickly as Byrne had instituted it. I watched with interest and mild surprise as Al transformed Banner into—not the dumb green Hulk—but the smaller, nastier piece of work that hadn't been seen since issue #1, namely the gray Hulk. (Of the two most frequently asked questions I get about the Hulk, one is, "What prompted you to make him gray?" My answer is, obviously, "Nothing. Al Milgrom did that.")

I should make it clear that, in the entire history of the Hulk, the only time I'd genuinely liked the character was in issue #6 of his original run, the story with the Metal Master. Written by Stan Lee and pencilled by Steve Ditko. It featured not only a perfectly articulate and thuggish Hulk, but also one of the most insane visual moments in the Hulk's history: a malfunction of the gamma ray machine left the Hulk with Bruce Banner's head. It was the most bizarre looking thing I'd ever seen, and even though it lasted less than three pages, it was supremely memorable. Much of what I've done in the past five years of writing the title has been variations on that one issue.

So this Banner-to-Gray-Hulk change, I felt, was a step in the right direction. However, the focus of the book quickly shifted to Al's other wrinkle, namely that Rick Jones was now going to be the dumb green Hulk. Banner was apparently rarely, if ever, going to become large and gray. Instead, in a flip-flop of their relationship, he was going to follow Rick around and be the new Hulk's sidekick. Personally, I thought that was a waste of the gray Hulk, but so what? It wasn't my book.


BREATHLESS FROM HIS HEART-POUNDING RUN, RICK REACHES THE LAIR OF THE HULK, TO FIND...
STAY BACK! I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT-- SAW IT ON THE SCREEN! I'M CHANGING!



A really bizarre moment from *Hulk* #6.

Then Bob Harras came into my office one day, plopped down in the chair opposite my desk, and asked if I would be interested in writing a fill-in issue of *Incredible Hulk*. I've always wondered what prompted Bob to come to the outcast direct sales manager. Maybe no one else was remotely interested in the title.

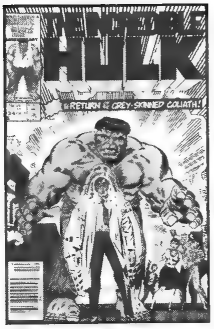
By this time I had forgotten my "Anyone but the Hulk" sentiments. I told Bob, "Sure," and pounded out in short order a "Prisoner"-esque story that focused on the gray Hulk and appeared in *Hulk* #328.

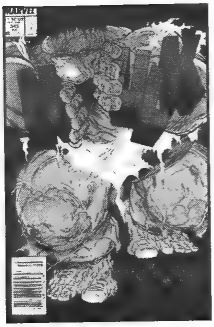
Shortly thereafter, Bob told me Al was leaving the book and, apparently in the tradition that had been set with Al's departure from *Spectacular Spider-Man*, I was asked if I would be interested in taking over the writing of the series. Where would I go with it, I was asked, if I were the writer?

I didn't have a clue. I mumbled something semi-coherent that apparently was good enough for Bob, and I was given the assignment.

What to do? Where to go with the series? The first thing I knew was that I was going to honor the tradition set by my two predecessors on the series: I was going to undo something fast. With Byrne, it was 20 years of continuity that said the Hulk and Banner were inseparable. With Al, it was the split that Byrne had created.

With me, it was going to be the Rick Jones Hulk. I strongly felt that Rick should be the normal-guy point of view character. The one who has all the weird shit happening all around




him, to the point where he's developed into a wry, seen-it-all kind of guy. Absolutely nothing should faze Rick Jones but, at the same time, he should proudly cling to his normalcy as the one thing that makes him unique in a universe of super-heroes, super-villains, alien armadas and super-intelligences.

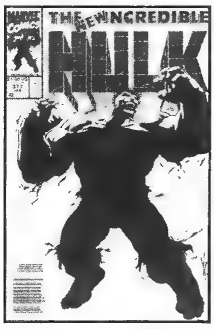
I felt that Rick's accompanying super-heroes was best served, not to be a super-hero wannabe, but instead as ther reader's window on an insane world. The guy who could, every so often, puncture pretensions and even turn to the reader and say, "Do you believe this shit?"

(I write this in December and have not yet seen a single issue of *Operation Galactic Storm*. However, I have seen a cover that features Rick dressed in tights and tossing around power bolts. This image is enough reason to ignore *Galactic Storm* entirely in the pages in the Hulk except for the most token of references. No one's shown me the plots in advance. I think they're afraid of making me angry. They wouldn't like me when I'm angry.)

As the old saying goes, I went back to basics. I read carefully the first six issues. Back to the days when Banner transformed under the influence of the moon (which is why I was amused, some years later, when Jack Kirby claimed in the pages of *The Comics Journal* that he'd been inspired to create the Hulk—single-handedly, of course—when he'd seen a frantic mother galvanized to feats of extraordinary strength when her daughter was trapped beneath a car. I have tremendous respect for Jack,

YOU MAY HAVE FOOLED YOUR MOTHER--
FWAK!
--BUT I'VE KNOWN WHAT YOU WOULD BECOME EVER SINCE THE BEGINNING!
BRUCE! BRIAN, YOU ARE INSANE! HOW COULD YOU HIT OUR CHILD--?
CHILD? NO NORMAL CHILD, NOT THAT ONE!
HE'S SOMETHING DIFFERENT... INHUMAN!
"MY SON"--THE MONSTER!

Bill Mantlo introduced the idea that Bruce Banner had been an abused child...




but those first issues had nothing to do with strength-under-stress. That aspect didn't occur until Kirby was no longer drawing the series).

And in reading those issues, I noticed a couple of bizarre things.

First: here was Bruce Banner, an intellectual, mild-mannered scientist —who was voluntarily changing into the rampaging monster he supposedly abhorred by means of a gamma machine. Why in heaven's name was he doing that? It defied reason. What could possibly prompt him to do something like that? Could it have been his other persona, exerting a subtle influence?

Second: whatever happened to the gamma bomb? Here it was, tested in the first issue. It obviously worked. The government had invested time and money into developing it. But the last we saw of it, the plans had been found in Banner's lab and handed off to a soldier. We hadn't seen it since. Would the government just deep-six such a devastating, working weapon? It didn't seem likely.

These two notions combined with one other thing—Bill Mantlo's ground-breaking story (issue #312) detailing Bruce Banner's tortured childhood and potential for destruction that had always hovered just below the surface. Since it related to the Hulk's origin, I re-read it carefully, and realized that Bill had set up the classic scenario for a multiple personality disorder. Most MPDs were abused as children. MPDs have been known to undergo physical changes when they shift personalities. It was a masterful idea—Bruce Banner most likely would have become an MPD

...which suggested to David that Banner might be a multiple personality.

anyway. But with the exposure to the gamma bomb, he was transformed into a super-powered MPD. It also neatly explained away all the personality shifts the Hulk had undergone over the years—it was all different personalities.

The problem was, Bill didn't explore it. He developed a dazzling concept and then, shortly thereafter, was gone. And it had been largely ignored since then.

Not anymore.

It was on this skeleton of ideas that I began to build the tissue and muscle of my first year's worth of stories. I also resolved to bring back the Hulk's oldest foe, the Leader, and try to make him even more formidable. The first step along those lines was having him totally redesigned. I'm sorry—asking to accept that someone's brain expanded is one thing. But that it expanded *straight up*? C'mon. The subsequent visual of the Leader was nicely menacing, although I still refer to him as "Old Jiffy-Pop head."

The artist was a young talent named Todd McFarlane. The other most asked question about the Hulk I get is, "What was it like to work with Todd McFarlane?" My response is always the same: You have to understand, I worked with Todd before he became a god. The art pages that now go for several hundred dollars were pages that the editor and I would look at in pencil form, nod, and say, "Oh, good! This doesn't suck nearly as bad as the previous issue."

This is not meant as a slam on Todd; I tend to think he'd agree with me. His work on the first issues of *Hulk* was, at best, adequate, because Bob wouldn't let him fall back on the bizarre, *outre* layouts that had been his trademark on *Infinity, Inc.*. The emphasis at Marvel was on storytelling, not artistic stuntwork. Todd was forced to abandon his layout crutches and work on his weaknesses. It was exciting to watch him improve, issue after issue, developing the style that he would become known for.

And what was the fan response to those issues? Plummeting sales, and two-thirds of the letters demanding the abolishment of the gray Hulk (and, preferably, me along with it) and the reinstatement of the one, true,

A POST-HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION IS KEEPING YOU TWO FROM BEATING EACH OTHER SENSELESS!
--SO WE CAN CONCENTRATE ON THE MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM.
HMM. BRUCE BANNER.
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO COME TO TERMS WITH EACH OTHER, BECAUSE YOU'RE ALL TEARING THIS MAN APART.

Marlo Chandler.

genuine "Hulk Smash!" Hulk. I'd read these letters (as I continue to read all the fan mail), look at the sales figures, and pound my head against the wall at night. I was so certain that I was on the right course, but the response seemed nil. How long would I be allowed to continue before someone came down from above and said, "What's with these faling sales? Where's the green Hulk that we licensed? Dump this storyline and character and put things right." But I knew I could not write that character, and that would be the end of it for me.

The turning point was *Hulk* #340. it tied in with the X-Men continuity and featured a Hulk/Wolverine slugfest. Todd, meantime, finally came into his own—perhaps not coincidentally, he inked his own work that issue. His inking was way too light, but Bob Harras had World Color Press compensate by overburning the negative and darkening the whole thing up, which matched the mood perfectly.

Retailers ordered double what they usually order of *Hulk*, which was a mistake, of course. They should have ordered ⅔ of their *X-Men* numbers. The result was that the issue blew out of the stores and now goes for $25 to $40.

What I was hoping was that readers who did not ordinarily buy *Hulk* would read #340, like what they saw, and come back for #341. This plan was partly thwarted by retailers who did not share my optimism and promptly cut back to #339 levels—i.e., pathetic. So when the fans who wanted to see more came in looking for #341, they couldn't find it. Bless their hearts, the readers didn't simply shrug their shoulders and forget about it. Instead they let their stores know that they wanted to buy this book. And slowly—agonizingly slowly—sales began to creep up.

Imagine my lack of joy when Todd said he was leaving as of issue #345. We convinced him to at least do layouts through #346, since that was the end of the Gamma Bomb storyline and we could start fresh with new artist Jeff Purves.

In the new storyline, the intention was to go back to the thuggish Hulk and make him, well . . . a thug. We would set him up with his own life and career—a leg breaker for a mobster—and then Banner would come in and muck it up for him. It was a reverse on years of the Hulk screwing things up for Bruce, and would, as a result, give the Hulk a taste of his own medicine. It was also part of the grand scheme I'd been developing that would, slowly but surely, work towards the eventual merging of the multiple personalities of Bruce Banner.

Originally, I thought of setting the stories in Chicago. It was Bob Harras who suggested we set the stories in Las Vegas, thereby taking advantage of the visual possibilities. Shortly thereafter, Bob gave the editorial reins over to Bobbie Chase. Her story sense and unswerving devotion to the title has earned her my undying loyalty (and earned me John Byrne's undying enmity when I defended her in *CBG* against his diatribes).

We also gave the Hulk a new love interest—Marlo Chandler. Marlo and her roommate Mona started out life as call girls, and were even scripted that way in the first two issues. But at the last moment, we were informed that there was no way in hell we were going to have the Hulk—even the undercover, "Mr. Fixit" Hulk—with a prostitute as a girlfriend. So there were some last minute dialogue changes, and Marlo and Mona went from whores to an aerobics instructor and nurse, respectively. Which should not be construed as a criticism of aerobics instructors and nurses.

Artist Jeff Purves' style was night-and-day to Todd's. Jeff was always something of a puzzle to me: An artist with tremendous potential who, I thought, never quite reached it on *Hulk*. I blame it on myself- I think the stories I wrote just didn't get him excited. The issues in which he excelled involved a two-parter set in Jarella's World, wherein Jeff got to draw castles and horses and stuff.

WHY? AWAY THE TEAR IT'S A SIGN OF HEART, WHO'D HATE THAT.
THAT'S BETTER
SO BANNER FOUND YOU WELL, NOW HIS PUNY LIFE'S COMPLETE.
YES, YOU FOUND ME AGAIN, BRUCE
DON'T CARE WE THAT I'M NOT!
PUNY BANNER TO YOU I SAID, OH, I AND CHAOS THROUGH THE YEARS
MI THINGS THOU DONT PROTECT TOO MUCH

The Hulk and Betty Ross come to terms in *Hulk* #344.





A dream sequence.

That was, apparently, what he most enjoyed. If I'd done a twelve-parter in Jarella's world, Jeff would have been a happy camper. But I didn't, and he wasn't.

Sales, meantime, continued to creep upward. Letters demanding the return of the dumb green Hulk had tapered off considerably—either those readers had left, or simply given up and settled down with "Mr. Fixit."

With the Vegas storyline wrapping up, I developed an idea for a four-parter that would be a jumping-on point for people who had heard good things about the Hulk but weren't yet buying it. This developed into "Countdown," and the sales department—which had been clamoring for something they could use as a big push—went to town with ads and posters promoting it. Walt Simonson developed the visual look for the key villain, Madman, as well as the four covers. And Jeff Purves . . .

Quit off the book as of the fourth part. I was less than ecstatic. Here I was trying to boost sales with this major four-parter, and suddenly we had no artist for the last part. Would he stay on to finish out the storyline, as Todd had done? Nope. He had other commitments, other things he wanted to do.

Meantime, the first part had hit the stands. I went to my local comic shop, where they didn't know who I was, and tried to buy a copy, "We're sold out," said the retailer, who then added, "It's the first issue of 'Countdown.' You known."

I had to laugh. Same writer, same penciller, same inker, same character. Yet the magic of promotion had convinced readers that they Must Not Miss This Issue.

But we still had no one to pencil the last part. And then Bobbie showed me samples from this exciting new artistic find—Dale Keown. And Dale was apparently hot to draw the Hulk.

I looked at his samples and said, "Wow! He doesn't suck!" (Which is my basic artistic criteria. I always figure the rest will work itself out.) Dale began immediately pencilling the last part of "Countdown" and, since we were so behind, the following issue was assigned to Sam Kieth so that Dale could get a jump on the issue after that.

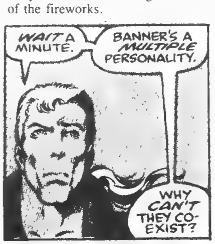
Poor Dale. That first issue he only got to draw a Hulk who was a scrawny shadow of his former self. The full power of a Keown Hulk didn't make itself evident until two issues later. It was an artistic shot in the arm, restoring the sort of vibrancy and vigor that we hadn't seen in a while.

Meantime, I was gearing up for the big personality merging story . . . and

Why not, indeed?

couldn't help but feel that something was missing. The dumb green Hulk had been a part of Hulk's history for so long. How could I ignore it in this, the ultimate examination of the Hulk's personas? On the other hand, how could I bring him back when it meant getting rid of the gray Hulk . . .

And that's when I realized: Banner's a multiple personality. Multiple doesn't mean simply two. Multiple means more than one. Why *couldn't* the gray and green Hulk co-exist? They'd hate each other's guts. Think of the fireworks.




So no, as rumors suggested, I was not "forced" to return the dumb green Hulk. It was a logical and appropriate story development. It also gave Dale a chance to cut loose in the Hulk vs. Hulk confrontations, a challenge to which he rose admirably. Bobbie, meantime, was giving me full license with dialogue, including such outrageous moments as having the gray Hulk distract the green Hulk with a shouted, "Hey, Look! Ain't that Lou Ferrigno?"

I told Dale what I was working towards—a mental image of the Hulk with ammo belts crisscrossing his chest , firing an impossibly huge gun while shouting " 'Hulk Smash' my ass! I'm going to kill something!" This would be the "new" Hulk. He would have the body and strength of the green Hulk, the cunning of the gray, and the intelligence of Banner. Talk about tough. Talk about nasty. Talk about hard-to-draw, as Dale did a number of character sketches that weren't quite on the mark.

The key to the new Hulk was the visual from back in issue #6—the Hulk with Banner's head. And that's what Dale finally delivered. Instead of the usual oval shape of the Hulk's head, the new Hulk's head was triangular in imitation of Bruce's skull. The Neanderthal brow was gone, and Dale had developed a face for the Hulk with stunning variety—he could look completely civilized, even pleasant one moment, and then threatening and savage the next. A new Hulk, with a new look and new perspective.

At the same time, I brought back Marlo Chandler from the Vegas storyline, for two reasons: I wanted a second continuing female character in the book (I felt confrontations between her and Betty would really spark things), and I thought that Dale could genuinely do justice to her visually. In that I was correct—his Marlo is achingly gorgeous, not to mention physically impressive enough that you believe she could survive a night of passion with the Hulk. The scenes with Betty and Marlo getting to know each other, including Betty's drunken recounting of her history and Marlo's inadvertent dying of Betty's hair green, remain some of my favorite moments in the series thus far.

It's those moments—the character moments (the Hulk and Betty coming to terms on a mountaintop; the Thing lighting the Hulk's cigar in a dream sequence; Bruce and Betty's reunion after thirty issues of separation; the new Hulk's "Hi honey, I'm home" greeting to a dumbfounded Betty; Rick Jones learning that Jim Wilson has tested HIV positive) that have made the Hulk special to me. That, and having had the chance to work with so many talented people, continues to make me grateful to be guiding the Hulk into his 400th issue and beyond.

And my wife never lets me forget I said I would write about anyone but . . . ●

The new, Jiffy-Pop-headed Leader.

*Todd McFarlane considers him one of the best artists working in comics today. The most recent* Overstreet Price Guide Update *includes him on its "hot artists" list.*

*Dale Keown is one of Marvel's best-kept secrets. He's been the regular penciller on* The Incredible Hulk *since issue #367, almost two years ago. During this time, sales on the book have increased and fans are reacting positively to Keown, and writer Peter David's, continuing metamorphosis of the series' title character. Yet Keown's received very little attention from the Marvel hype machine, which tends to focus its spotlights on either the company's newest titles or their latest million-seller.*

*There's no manufactured excitement surrounding his work; Keown's "fan favorite" status is genuine, and the result of word of mouth promotion. In this, his first major interview, Dale Keown talks about the Hulk, dealing with his newfound popularity, rock & roll music, and a lot of other things.*

***This interview was conducted over the telephone in early October, 1991.***

AMAZING HEROES #198 January, 1992

# ROCK 'N' ROLL WITH THE HULK

## DALE KEOWN INTERVIEWED BY LEN WONG

### Who I Am, How I Came to *The Incredible Hulk*

**AH:** *Let's start by finding out the correct way to pronounce your last name.*

**KEOWN:** It's the word "key," then "own." Actually, my father's family came from Ireland and the name was "McKeown" at one point. I don't know why they dropped the "Mc."

**AH:** *So I guess you're not related to Dave Keon from the Toronto Maple Leafs.*

**KEOWN:** No, but I used to get that in school all the time. But I'm not really a sports kind of guy. I never played any sports in school or anything. I watched the Canada Cup, and wow, it was pretty good.

**AH:** *Yeah. And we whipped those Americans in the final.*

**KEOWN:** Yeah.

(laughter)

**AH:** *How did you get on the* Hulk *series?*

**KEOWN:** Well, it's kind of a long story.

**AH:** Amazing Heroes *pays for the phone call.*

**KEOWN:** Right on! Well, I guess it was in 1989 that I was doing a book called *Dragonforce* for Eternity. No, actually it was Aircel, then they all merged together—Adventure, Eternity, and Aircel. And I was kind of unhappy. I wasn't inking my own work, and it looked like crap. And I've always wanted to work for Marvel; I've always geared my work for the Marvel "house style." It's sort of a John Byrne style.

Anyhow, one day Joe Rubinstein saw something I had done. He said, "this guy sort of has the Marvel look. And he works for the independents." So Joe relayed his number through Barry Blair, who was the head of the company at the time. And Barry passed the number on to me about a month later. I phoned up Joe, and he said, "Listen, why don't you do a character for the new *Marvel Universe Update* book?" So I did a sketch and sent it in, and I guess Greg Wright was the editor at the time, and he said no. He didn't like my style. Said it was too polished, that it looked too much like Wendy Pini's.

**AH:** *"It's too good for Marvel."*

**KEOWN:** He said I draw too much like a girl, and I thought, "What? What do I do? Put on a dress at the desk?" But I figured, seeing how they're kind of interested in me, I might as well go all out and send some real submissions in. I hadn't done that in a few years, and this time, a lot of the editors there said that they liked my work. Some of the editors at DC, too. I made a list of all the editors' names, and I phoned them up and hassled them for awhile, and then Bob Harras expressed some interest, and I sent him some more submissions. Actually, these were the first five pages of the *Dragonforce* I was working on; I killed two birds with one stone.

And then Bobbie Chase needed a fill-in artist on *Nth Man*, and I got that. I thought that was great. I made sure I did a really good job, of course, and I got the work in before deadline. As a result of that job, I got *Hulk*. It just happened that . . .um. . .what's his name. . .Jeff Purves. Yeah. I guess he wasn't happy doing *The Hulk*. He wanted to draw castles, and there weren't enough castles in the book. As rumor has it, anyways. So they needed somebody to do the last issue of "Countdown," and then be the regular penciller on *The Hulk*, and of course, I jumped on it. Bobbie phoned me up, and I'm going, "yeah," and I'm dancing around the room, thinking, "All right! I got *The Hulk*!" I couldn't believe it. And the rest is history, as they say.

### Fandom Days

**AH:** *Were you a big Hulk fan before you got on the book?*

**KEOWN:** Oh yeah. Oh, I was the biggest Hulk fan. when I was fourteen years old, I was one of those guys; this about 1976. The city I grew up in has a population of about 20,000. And we didn't have a 7-11 or a Mac's Milk or anything. We just had corner stores. and every Wednesday, the comic books used to come in, and I would go to the store and wait. I knew they'd come in around 5:00 in the afternoon, so I'd stand there and wait for the truck to arrive. I was so eager, with this stupid look on my face, that the lady would say, "Listen, why don't you just sort through them? You look like you're pretty enthusiastic." So I'd stand there and pick the *Hulks* out, then I'd buy them and go home and savor them. I was a big Hulk fan. I used to have boxes of the old Sal Buscema and Joe Staton *Hulks*. There was a time when I wouldn't go anywhere without them.

My father has a farm, and we'd go there on the weekends. The farm didn't have any electricity or plumbing. Just an outhouse, a little shack . . .

**AH:** *With the little moon on the door.*

**KEOWN:** That's exactly it. And we didn't have any TV or anything; just a battery operated AM radio. So those *Hulk* comics kept me company on many nights there.

**AH:** *You did the old "stay up all night with a flashlight under the sheets!"*

**KEOWN:** No. Actually, my father would drive the truck up and we would hook up electricity through the battery. So we had light, but we could only use it for a few hours at a time. I'd be sitting there on my little bed, reading comic books at night. And I'd be trying to draw panels and stuff. At home, I've still got boxes of great big panels I tried to duplicate on big sheets of paper. That's how it all started, I guess.

### Our Story So Far. . .

**AH:** *For the benefit of people who aren't familiar with what's been going on in* The Hulk *lately, why don't you give a quick summary of what's happened in the last year or so.*

**KEOWN:** Let's see. . .the Hulk now has the intellect of Bruce Banner. But he also has some psychological problems. He has a hair-trigger temper like

A cover for Eternity Comics' *Dracula*.

he always had, but he also switches back and forth. He has these incredible mood swings. I wouldn't say he's manic-depressive, but one minute he can be very angry, and the next, he's totally calm. The Hulk part of him will take over, then the Bruce Banner part will come back and go, "Listen. This is ridiculous. You're not the green Hulk anymore. You're the new Hulk and you've got intelligence."

**AH:** *"The new green Hulk."*

**KEOWN:** Exactly. So he's just as intelligent as Bruce Banner, and Banner was a childhood genius. I think that Peter David merged the characters together so that he could get the Hulk to a level where he could write some intelligent stories.

**AH:** *And you managed to get rid of the purple pants?*

**KEOWN:** Yeah. The famous purple pants. I get more questions about the purple pants

**AH:** *What? People want to see them back?*

**KEOWN:** Oh yeah. People like them. I think the reason they originally made the pants purple was that purple looks nice against green. But actually, the jumpsuit that I have the Hulk wearing, I ask the colourist to color it purple once in a while.

I'm working on a storyline right now that takes place in the Middle East; a Gulf War kind of adaptation, I guess, for lack of a better explanation. The Pantheon, a group that Hulk is now part of, is going in to liberate this country, and Hulk's going to be taking on the S.H.I.E.L.D. Mandroid. S.H.I.E.L.D. sold this dictator of a bunch of Mandroids. It's sort of a parallel to what's actually happening in the world. We've got the Hulk taking on whole armies and beating them. It's great; I love that kind of stuff. Also, for the first time ever, the Hulk is shooting guns.

**AH:** *Who are the Pantheon?*

**KEOWN:** They're a giant think tank.

**AH:** *They're not super-heroes, are they?*

**KEOWN:** Well, the leader of the Pantheon, Agamemnon, is a god. And he fathered all these children. Thousands of children over hundreds of years. And all these children are now working under him, and what they do is try to avert disasters, fight wars, that sort of thing. I guess they've always been around, but they're so low-key and good at what they do that they

From *Dragonring*, inked by Keown.





Pencils from Keown's first issue of the *Hulk*.

haven't been detected before. But now they're in a major war in the Middle East, so they're becoming more noticeable.

**AH:** *Do you have any input in the plots?*

**KEOWN:** Well, Peter says that if I've got any ideas, I should phone him up and we'd discuss them. But Peter's pretty well got that covered. I put in all the visuals. For example, if Peter says the Hulk should be wearing whatever, I may just ignore it and draw what I think he should be wearing. If I think he looks good in a tank top, I'll draw him in a tank top.

**AH:** *Speaking of tank tops, what's going to happen with Betty and Marlo?*

**KEOWN:** I don't know. Peter hasn't said anything about that. They're friends, obviously, and there's a story coming up—there'll be some foreshadowing in the plots—about Rick's mother. He's an orphan, but this lady's been phoning up the hotline that Betty works at, saying she's Rick's mother. And it'll lead into this story about Rick.

### Crossovers & Team-Ups

**AH:** *What do you think about these* Infinity Gauntlet *crossovers? Do you enjoy that sort of thing, or. . .*

**KEOWN:** Yeah! I like it. I like the whole universe thing.

**AH:** *You like the idea of all the crossovers?*

**KEOWN:** I think the magic of Marvel is that there's this whole universe of characters who can all interact with each other. I remember when I was a fan, I loved it when Hulk would guest star in other books, or Spider-Man would guest star in it. I like the whole universe thing.

**AH:** *The reason I ask this is because I found, as a fan reading the last few issues of* Hulk, *you guys seem to be building the story up to something, and then all of a sudden, the Hulk starts disappearing and reappearing, and if you weren't following all the tie-ins, things didn't really make sense anymore.*

**AH:** That's the thing about crossovers. You really have to pay attention to every little detail if you want to do a proper crossover.

**AH:** *Yeah. Who's stronger—the Hulk or the Thing?*

**KEOWN:** Oh, the Hulk is much stronger. Well, I don't know. There's this other Thing; the real lumpy Thing. [*laughter*].

**AH:** *The new Thing?*

**KEOWN:** The newer Thing. He's supposed to be stronger than the original Thing, but the new Hulk is stronger than the old green Hulk. And the madder he gets, the stronger he gets. And he already starts out stronger. So far, you can't really gauge how strong he gets, because nobody knows how mad he can get. But the new Hulk can get pretty mad.

**AH:** *Are we going to see another Hulk/Thing fight anytime soon?*

**KEOWN:** Oh, I'd love to do that. But the only reason I'd like to do that is I've never drawn the Thing. And him and the Hulk together, fighting. . . I remember back in about 1975, my favorite *Hulk* issue was the one with the Hulk and the Thing battling.

**AH:** *Those were always good stories.*

**KEOWN:** I loved it. I just read it over and over again. I was about eleven years old at the time. Yeah, I'd love to do a Hulk/Thing story.

**AH:** *Maybe you should tell Peter.*

**KEOWN:** Yeah. Well, I don't know. I remember I mentioned that I'd never drawn Wolverine, except for one cover, and I said, can we put him in the book? And Peter said no. He sorta went, "I don't know. We've done that so many times." He's had so many Wolverine stories. But that'd be good —the Hulk and the Thing.

### Pencilling

**AH:** *We've talked about Peter. What about your inker, Mark Farmer?*

**KEOWN:** He's great.

**AH:** *You're here in Canada and he's in England. . .*

**KEOWN:** Yeah, but I talk to him once in a while. It's just the time zone thing that screws me up. If I phone him at 8:00 p.m. here, he's in bed. He's been sleeping for hours. So whenever I phone him, I call early in the morning.

I've talked to him maybe three times. He's a nice guy. He says he likes working over my stuff. He's working over Alan Davis' stuff, too. And his stuff over Alan Davis—wow. I think Mark's inks work over Alan Davis better than they do over me. Alan Davis' pencils are so tight, you could probably print them as they are.

**AH:** *How tight are your pencils?*

**KEOWN:** My pencils have become tighter lately. Before, I used to use a really hard lead, a 5H. I remember Bob McLeod said that it looks very tight, but as soon as you put an ink line over a pencil that light, the pencils look lighter. It was harder for the inkers to work over. I've recently gone for an HB.

Also, I didn't like to smudge my pages a lot. But now I just don't care—they'll be erased eventually.

anyways. I'm spending a lot more time and putting a lot more detail in my pages now; sometimes I'll look at the past issues of *Hulk* and think, "Oh geez, I wish I had put details in there." Now I'm paying more attention to all the details.

**AH:** *Are you a fast artist?*

**KEOWN:** No. I choose to do one page a day. I know some artists who can do two or three, but I choose to do one. I don't want to rush myself. I mean, there was one book where I did ten pages in three days, full pencils. . .

**AH:** *This was for an issue of* Hulk*?*

**KEOWN:** Yeah. I was late and had to make sure the work got in. But that's the most pages I've ever done that quickly. They didn't look that bad, but I chose not to do that regularly, because it drives you crazy. Doing all those pages like that is so tedious. I like to get myself geared up for one page, and focus on that one page as my daily project.

**AH:** *Do you lay out the whole book at once, or do you just go through page by page?*

**KEOWN:** I do a brief pencil layout and then I go over that with an HB pencil. That's the way I'm working right now. I read the whole plot, and I take a fluorescent yellow highlighter and circle the panels. Peter doesn't punctuate the pages. He just says, "Here's three pages of plot."

**AH:** *It's up to you to pace it?*

**KEOWN:** Yeah. He'll go, "Here's from page four to seven. Wherever you want to stop and go, it's up to you." So I just go through the plot and circle the panels. I try to figure out what would make a good panel. And then I'll put a little star beside what I think would be the most dynamic panel, the biggest panel for each page.

Unused art of the new Hulk.

### Inking

**AH:** *Do you have the desire to ink your own work again?*

**KEOWN:** Big time. I actually inked the covers of issues #381 and 383 to 386.

**AH:** *Are you going to be doing the inks on the insides at any time?*

**KEOWN:** Oh, I'd love to. Actually, I'm gearing up to do that on issue #400. I think that's going to be a double-sized issue. There's going to be however many pages of Hulk story, then pinups by all the past Hulk artists, then an eight-page story by someone else. I'd like to ink that one, as well.

**AH:** *Any other inkers you'd like to work with?*

**KEOWN:** I think the obvious inker would be Scott Williams. He makes anybody look good; he's such a good inker. And there's Art Thibert and all those guys that work at Homage Studios. Mark Farmer: I think with the new tight pencils I've been doing, it'll look a lot better. Joe Rubinstein's sort of underrated. He does some good stuff. I don't know; there's probably some inkers out there that I don't even know about that are really good.

### Getting Bigger

**AH:** *So you don't really follow the industry that much?*

**KEOWN:** No, I don't. I hardly ever talk to anybody. I talk to my editors once every two weeks or so. At the most, once a week. Lately, I've talked with Bobbie more, because I think she's going to focus on *The Hulk*, as far as editing goes. The popularity of the book's been getting better.

**AH:** *Yeah, I noticed that Marvel was starting to promote the book a bit, and then the whole X-mania thing happened. . .*

**KEOWN:** X-mania. That's a good word. But of course you can't argue with those kind of numbers.

**AH:** *I suppose. But sales on* The Hulk *are improving?*

**KEOWN:** Yes. I think the most popular book would be issue #377. The neon cover. That was actually supposed to be a gold cover.

**AH:** *They reprinted it in gold, didn't they?*

**KEOWN:** They reprinted the logo in gold, then they reversed the colors—instead of having the Hulk black and the background green, it was the other way around.

### Aircel & Rock & Roll

**AH:** *Let's go into your background a little bit. You mentioned that you started out working for Aircel.*

**KEOWN:** Yeah. That was the first company. That's a funny story. It was in '84 or '85.

**AH:** *Was Barry Blair self-publishing then?*

**KEOWN:** Uh-huh. Oh—there's a funny story about that name. It used to be an insulation company.

**AH:** Barry Blair used to have an insulation company?

**KEOWN:** Yeah. he was partners with this guy who will remain nameless, because I don't like him. They were using UFFI, urea formaldehyde foam insulation, and it was banned, so they had to stop doing that. And they said, "What are we going to do?" And then Barry says, "Well, I can draw. Let's start up a comic book company! Yeah! Oh, waitaminute. That means we have to register a name, and that costs money. . ." "No we don't. We'll just keep the name!" [*laughter*] so they did. They had been around for about a year before I joined the cast.

**AH:** *This is in Ottawa?*

**KEOWN:** Yup. I remember before that, I was playing in a rock band called Sad. And we used to play anything from George Thorogood to Black Sabbath. Heavy stuff. And I had the long hair. Well, I still have long hair, but I used to wear spandex with red and black stripes and leopard spots, and I had glitter and eyeliner and all that. The band eventually folded because I just got tired of it all.

**AH:** *Was this a bar band?*

**KEOWN:** A bar band. We were doing pretty good, playing in "A" rooms and stuff. But we also played what I like to call "The Toilet Bowl Tour," in Northern Ontario.

**AH:** *Where they're just waiting to see the strippers come on.*

**KEOWN:** Exactly. In between the strippers. I just wanted to pursue my musical career in Ottawa, but at that time, Ottawa wasn't a music mecca.

**AH:** *It's still not.*

**KEOWN:** I wanted to play hard rock. But it was all technofluff stuff, and I wasn't into it. So I thought that what I'd do is get a day job, and while I'm working, at nights I'd draw. I always loved to draw, and I still collected comic books at that time. So I cut my hair, and since I used to cut meat, I went to grocery stores, and put in my application. And while I was waiting for answers from butcher shops, I was watching the news, and the guy says, "On the next segment, Ottawa's own comic book company." Bing.

I went upstairs and got a piece of paper and a pen, and sure enough, there was a feature on Ottawa's comic book company. They showed pictures of *Elflord* and *Samurai* those were the books they were doing at the time. Then they showed Barry Blair saying, "We're looking for artists." I said, "Wow! I can't believe this! I can't believe my luck!" So I jotted down their number, and the next day I phoned them up, and the guy I said I didn't like answered and said, "Well, we're not really looking for anybody. Call me in two weeks." Burst my

Puny Banner. . .

Note the Don Martin toe.

. . .and bulky Hulk.

balloon, or what?

But I asked him what the address was, and said I'd come right down anyways. He said, "Well, if you want, go ahead." I went down there and showed them my stuff. I'd been working on *Fantastic Four* submissions at the time. So finally Barry says, "We don't do *Fantastic Four*, but anyway, you're hired." They hired me on the spot. They needed an artist for *Samurai*, which was a black & white martial arts thing, and which I was totally unprepared for. I didn't have the skills for it at the time, but I did it anyways. And those books are still out there to haunt me. (laughter) I don't know if you've seen them or not.

**AH:** *No.*

**KEOWN:** Oh God, please don't. The art was sort of a cross between John Byrne and Bernie Wrightson, where I tried to do the John Byrne proportions with Wrightson linework. It didn't really work that well. I had chins jutting out, lopsided proportions. . . .

The story was about this guy whose weapon was a samurai sword. I knew nothing about samurai swords. Barry Blair had black belts. He was quite adept at doing all that martial arts stuff. He knew exactly how a samurai sword was to be used. I was using it like a Conan sword, but with a samurai sword, if you want to kill somebody, you're supposed to slice it. I've got the characters using it like an axe. I'm drawing these scenes where he's stabbing people and hacking off arms; I'm just being really graphic with all this black and white blood. There's one scene where he's chopping some guy's arm off, and it looks like somebody's chopping a nice piece of ham. There's a little bone, with meat around it.

**AH:** *There's your butcher training popping up. . .*

**KEOWN:** If you ever find one of those *Samurais*, it's pretty funny to look at. I should actually show you one.

**AH:** *How long were you on the book?*

**KEOWN:** I did it for about a year. And the thing is, people were used to Barry Blair's work, and I got a lot of negative response when I was doing it. My style was so different; it was so scattered. We got so much negative mail, we decided to change the book: "Well, Dale, maybe you should try this."

That was my first experience with an editor, somebody telling me how to draw. I didn't know. I was pretty much in the dark as far as the comic industry went. So I changed my style, and then I ended up just inking the book, and then I went from *Samurai* to a book called *Dragonring*.

**AH:** *Did you create that?*

**KEOWN:** No, that was created by Barry Blair as well. I ended up pencilling, co-plotting, inking, and coloring it. We had gone from black & white to color. All the books were laser separated. It was a really nice looking color. The actual drawing was horrible, but the colors were nice. And then one day we had this meeting, and Barry said, "We should start doing super-hero books because your style is more super-hero oriented." So we decided to change *Dragonring* to *Dragonforce*, and make all the existing characters super-heroes. One character had the powers of a dragon, and so on. *Dragonforce* was my first attempt at super-heroes.

**AH:** *And how'd that go?*

**KEOWN:** It went all right. It was all right when I was pencilling, inking, and coloring the work, but it's expensive to laser separate a whole book, and the company ended up having to go back to black & white. Then we decided we wanted to do more books per month, so I teamed up with Jim Somerville on inks but we worked too quickly and sales went down because the books looked horrible. The end of the run on *Dragonforce* is when I started doing the *Hulk* stuff.

### How I Work

**AH:** *Did you have any formal art training when you started doing the work for Aircel?*

**KEOWN:** No. I just draw a lot. When I was playing music, I would draw during the day. When you're playing music, you're on stage from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. or so, depending on which province you're playing in. And when you come off stage, even if it's 4 a.m., you're still so wound up, you have to do something. You either go out partying or off with your ladyfriend or sit and play your guitar some more or whatever. And I drew. I drew pictures to unwind. The next morning, you get up and you have the whole day to kill. Of course, you don't get up until 5:00 in the afternoon, but you have hours to kill, and I'd spend them drawing more pictures.

I played music for five years, and during that time, I kept drawing and drawing, and got better and better. What was the question?

**AH:** *Whether you had any formal art training.*

**KEOWN:** Oh, okay. No, that's the only training. It's just a lot of practice.

**AH:** *What's a typical day like for you?*

Unused cover for *Hulk* #382.





A pin-up for X-Factor: Guido discovers a new use for Colossus.

**KEOWN:** If I'm in a deadline crunch, sometimes I'll work all night. I'll get up at say, 1:00 in the afternoon and start working. I'll take a supper break, and then work all night. At 5 in the morning, I'll take another break, and then keep working until Fed Ex comes. I'll call Fed Ex and they arrive by 5:00 PM the next day. I want to make sure I have a package for Fed Ex. And once the package is off, I can relax. "Oh finally, the package is gone. Marvel's going to get their pages."

And then if I'm tired, I'll sleep five hours or so, then get up and go to work again. My whole life right now consists of drawing, and that's it. Sometimes the creative juices aren't flowing, but when they are, I like to take advantage of them. I can go for hours and hours, sitting there, drawing. I just love it so much. But after I've finished a book and I'm feeling a little burnt out, I'll take a few days off. I'll play my music or do some recording. I have a studio in my home.

### More Music

**AH:** *Have you released any of these recordings commercially?*

**KEOWN:** No.

**AH:** *Are you going to be?*

**KEOWN:** No. Well, actually, I'm probably the only comic book artist to say that he's recorded at Vancouver's Little Mountain Sound. For whatever that's worth. [*laughter*].

**AH:** *What group did you record with?*

**KEOWN:** I was playing with a band called Elvin Screamer. And I had a logo for them—a giant screaming head. We used to play really heavy blues. And we won a Battle of the Bands. The prize was twenty free hours at Little Mountain and a video. The video never happened. The lead singer was a cocaine addict and he spent it all on drugs. But we did use the twenty hours recording time, and that was really exciting. me. We had an engineer. We recorded some songs and they sounded okay. I don't have them, though. I think the drummer kept them.

Music's pretty important to me. When I work, I like to put on some music. Metallica, something that's heavy. It really helps me when I draw. There's sort of a connection between the two acts—I think I use the same part of my brain when I'm drawing as when I was playing. When you play music, you're creating something from nothing. That's sort of the same thing that happens when you start off with a blank piece of paper. Well, there's a plot there, but I'm the director. I draw the pictures and create something from nothing.

**AH:** *Do you just play rock & roll?*

**KEOWN:** Sometimes I'll put on a soundtrack. *The Mission* is good. But today, I put on Metallica. They're really heavy. It kind of fits with the scenes I'm drawing. I'm doing war scenes, and I've got Metallica blasting in the background.

**AH:** *Well, there's that thing with the Gulf War pilots who'd listen to Van Halen every day.*

**KEOWN:** Yeah, it's inspiring. Music is inspiring. Sometimes, I'll get up and I won't feel like drawing, and I'll put on some music and it'll inspire me to draw, to get what needs to be done done.

### Influences

**AH:** *Who are some of your artistic influences?*

**KEOWN:** Oh geez. This is obvious—John Byrne was my biggest influence. He was the reason I got back into reading comic books when I was living in Vancouver. When I was twelve, I collected for a number of years, and then I stopped when I got into music and went out on the road. Also because I discovered girls. But when I found myself in Vancouver, I had more free time, and I was in a Mac's Milk and saw a *Fantastic Four*. I looked at it and it was the fist time I'd ever seen Byrne's work.

**AH:** *You didn't know about any of his* X-Men *work?*

**KEOWN:** I didn't know about any of that stuff. My introduction to John Byrne was *Fantastic Four*. I looked at his work and thought, "This guy's really good." He's got a really playful style, but the art's tight and there's a certain amount of realism in there. He got back into comic books; I decided to start collecting *Fantastic Four*. And then I discovered Byrne's work on *X-Men*, and that stuff was even better.

**AH:** *Yeah. So Byrne's an influence. Anybody else?*

**KEOWN:** Bernie Wrightson. I didn't discover Wrightson until 1985. I wasn't aware of any of his *Swamp Things* and that stuff. I was a Marvel zombie back then.

**AH:** *What did you find of Wrightson's, then?*

**KEOWN:** You know that big book called *A Look Back?*

**AH:** *Yeah, with all the periods of his work. They just reissued it.*

**KEOWN:** Oh, I'll have to get one. Anyway, I discovered that book and I fell in love with his work. This guy is so glossy and luxurious; his stuff

is so beautiful. I fell in love with his linework. And I got into his stuff right when I started working for Aircel, so as soon as I saw it, I started incorporating his style into my work on *Samurai*.

And then there's Sal Buscema. When I was twelve, I loved his stuff. Joe Staton. John Buscema. And more recently, I find I'm influenced by guys like Jim Lee and Alan Davis, guys like that. Whilce Portacio. Larry Stroman's work has a look all its own. I've got a whole mish-mash of influences.

### Life as a Pro

**AH:** *I can't help but notice that all these guys work for Marvel.*

**KEOWN:** I don't go to comic stores very often. The only reason I keep up with Marvel is because they send me big batches of comics.

**AH:** *So we should tell the other companies to put you on their comp lists.*

**KEOWN:** Yeah, we should do that. Because I think I'm missing a lot of stuff.

**AH:** *You don't get free comics. Do you get invited to many conventions?*

**KEOWN:** I get a lot of phone calls, but I don't answer my phone. I'm kind of eccentric that way. The phone rings, and especially when I'm working, I can't be bothered to pick it up. I just let the machine answer it for me. Then I try to get back to people later. Sometimes people will leave messages on my machine asking me to go to conventions and I'll just forget about it, or else the message gets taped over. Or somebody will send me a letter and it'll end up in a pile in my studio.

**AH:** *Is this because you don't want to travel?*

**KEOWN:** It interferes with my drawing time. Sometimes, if I'm going to do a convention, I'd go somewhere that's nice and hot. Like Miami. I know this Bill Mattern guy that does the Miami cons. I like to go somewhere worthwhile. Like when you had the convention in Vancouver. I love Vancouver, there's nice weather there. I'll go where there's nice weather.

**AH:** *Though we ended up having a freak snowstorm the day of the convention.*

**KEOWN:** Yeah! It totally paralyzed the whole city. Amazing. It was great.

**AH:** *Are there any new projects you're working on, besides* Hulk*?*

**KEOWN:** The only other thing I'm going to be doing is an ad for the next Marvel Swimsuit magazine, and I'm going to do an X-Men pinup with Colossus and Polaris. I think it's going to be in the next *X-Men Annual*. I don't know. Suzanne Gaffney, the assistant editor, phoned me up and asked me to do that. I'm going to pencil and ink it. I did an X-Factor pin-up a while ago, but other than that, this will be the first X Men work I've done. And that's it. Oh—and I'll be doing the cover for this issue of *Amazing Heroes*.

**AH:** *Right. You must be one of the few people in comics without a prestige format series or graphic novel in the works.*

**KEOWN:** I'd like to do one. If I had the time, I'd jump on that kind of stuff. But I want to devote all my time to *The Hulk* right now. I'm happy doing *Hulk*. Think about it—the Hulk was a hero of mine when I was a kid. It's such a big thrill for me now.

And I'm just happy to have a job in this day and age. To be doing what I love to do and be making all right money at it. I'm a happy camper; I can't complain about anything. I come from a part of the country where my family and the people there work really hard. They're people who work the earth for a living. People who work on oil wells and work in the bush and on farms. I feel really fortunate that I can sit here and draw, do what I want to do and make money. I love it. I don't have any negative feelings about this industry at all. Life could be a lot worse.

**AH:** *Last question—could Hulk beat up Superman?*

**KEOWN:** Yes. And don't ask how large Hulk's penis is, because that's . . . I get that question at conventions. [*laughter*]

**AH:** *Seriously?*

**KEOWN:** Oh, yeah. And I'm going, "Well, use your imagination." I couldn't believe this guy asked me that. [*laughter*]

**AH:** *"Can you draw a sketch of the Hulk's penis?"*

**KEOWN:** I get some of that sometimes.

**AH:** *To draw Hulk's penis, or to do erotic sketches?*

**AH:** Guys ask me to do nude shots of She-Hulk and whatever. Sometimes I'll oblige. Why not?

**AH:** *I can see why you're not so keen to do many conventions.*

**KEOWN:** Actually, it's funny, because when I was in junior high school, guys would give me 50 cents to draw pictures of naked women for them. I'm not the only artist who used to do this. I can't remember who told me this, but this other artist used to do the same thing.

**AH:** *Maybe you guys could do a comic for Fantagraphic's smut line.*

**KEOWN:** The smut line. Oooh. Actually, that's something I would never do.

**AH:** *You wouldn't do hardcore?*

**KEOWN:** No. Get a life.

**AH:** *This is the stuff that we'll probably have to leave out of the interview. . . .* ●

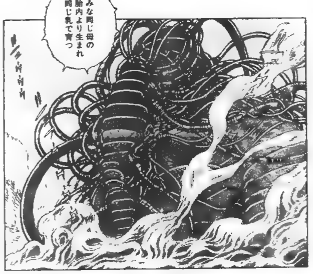
The Newest Hulk: " 'Hulk Smash!' my ass! I'm going to kill something!"





# WHAT YOU'RE MISSING FROM JAPAN

**by Ed Henderson**




"*Donor Hunter*? This is a comic about organ transplants?" I'd been having linguistic problems, but that's nothing unusual, and after four years in Japan I've learned to skip past parts I don't understand. This time though, it was part of the title, and things were not falling into place. The vital word, "*Dona*"—spelled in *katakana*, a script usually used for foreign words, but which may also be used for style—wasn't in the dictionary. The story wasn't making sense. Finally, I asked a Japanese friend.

"Donor," she said, pointing to her kidney.

And I had been thinking the hospital scenes were gratuitous.

*Donor Hunter* can be described as Arnold Schwarzenegger doing piece work (literally) for the Mayo Clinic. Most scenes are formed around the legs or bust of the hero's mini-skirted girlfriend/assistant. And, like all heroes, in the end, he always gets his part.

You've read *Akira*, you've read *Appleseed, Lone Wolf and Cub, Barefoot Gen*, maybe picked up a Viz Comics edition of *Mai, the Psychic Girl*, or *Lum*, even tried *Mangajin* to see what they're like in the original. But have you really read Japanese *manga*? Not by a long shot. You haven't even read anything vaguely representative.

Last year, 1.8 billion *manga*—comics—were sold, and that number is just the books that are strictly comics—it doesn't include the billions of other magazines that feature comics for up to 50% of their content. Everybody reads comics: the staid middle-aged businessman is likely to be reading the same title as the high school student next to him on the train.

Most *manga* are weekly, featuring ten or more stories, totalling upwards of 250 pages; monthlies may be three times that size. Color is almost unheard of, except for covers and frontispieces. *Manga* are usually drawn and written by a single artist, and because of the weekly production schedule, drawing quality is low, except for the sex and bloodshed scenes, which are lovingly rendered; the remainder of most stories look like they were drawn by a semi-talented high school student.

Fredrick L. Schodt, in his indispensable book, *Manga! Manga!: the World of Japanese Comics*, explains that this is because of the fact that a single artist may be producing as many as 500 pages of work a month, and has no time for niceties. And he's right. However, this speed has allowed the drawings to develop into a style beyond quality, an expressive kind of minimalism that accents the smallest tic of a character and really brings out the power and drama of action. Japanese comics move, and they move fast. This is aided by minimal scripting: an entire story may contain fewer words than one Alan Moore dialogue balloon.

With such a massive, ready-made audience (*Shonen Jump*, the most popular magazine, broke the 6 million copy a week barrier in 1991), there's something for everybody. And because Japan has never had a Comics Code, in every title the sex is sexy enough, the violence bloody enough, to send the most liberal U.S. parent screaming to a congressional commission. In fact, in 1988, Hong Kong outlawed the importation of Japanese

# DAITORYO

**(THe Master Carpenter)**
**by BIG JO**
*published in Bear Club*

# JUBEI NO KEN

**(Sword of Jubei)**
**by Yasuhiko Inoue**
*published in Animal House*

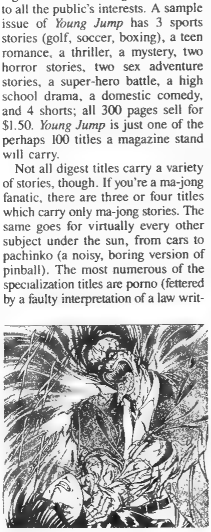
# MAD BULL

**written by Kazuo Koike**
**drawn by Kira Inoue**
*Published in Young Jump*

comics, due to their "pornographic" content. Titles such as *Rapeman* brought on the action, although until recently they seemed to be accepted as quite normal in Japan.

While the U.S. publishers do single story books, Japanese publishers use digest format, allowing them to cater to all the public's interests. A sample issue of *Young Jump* has 3 sports stories (golf, soccer, boxing), a teen romance, a thriller, a mystery, two horror stories, two sex adventure stories, a super-hero battle, a high school drama, a domestic comedy, and 4 shorts; all 300 pages sell for $1.50. *Young Jump* is just one of the perhaps 100 titles a magazine stand will carry.

Not all digest titles carry a variety of stories, though. If you're a ma-jong fanatic, there are three or four titles which carry only ma-jong stories. The same goes for virtually every other subject under the sun, from cars to pachinko (a noisy, boring version of pinball). The most numerous of the specialization titles are porno (fettered by a faulty interpretation of a law written by Douglas MacArthur during the Occupation, which prohibits depiction of genitalia—this translates to strange, blank patches in the middle of the frame, but the law is constantly being pushed to its limits; some of those blank patches have rather distinctive shapes), with titles such as *Young Vitamin*, *Candy*, *Comic Pumps*, and *Erotopia*.



One thing that all titles, regardless of genre, have in common is endings. A Japanese comics reader is baffled to hear that *Superman* has been going for upwards of fifty years. *Manga* stories may continue for up to a decade, but an ending is inevitable so that the publisher can put the whole run out in a hard-bound edition or in a paperback series, where the real profits are.

The sheer physical size of a regular Japanese comics, coupled with the ready availability of collections, means that comics are not really collectable the way they are in the U.S. Storage would be a problem by issue 20, since you'd have to save the whole book to collect a single story. Also, the books are printed on paper so cheap that it's not even recyclable.

Add on the business comics, the history comics, the sports comics, the girl's comics, and the comic explanations of current events to the digest titles, and the stack of books for even a brief overview of the industry is two meters high.

From this plethora of material, it takes a while to cull out gems, but they are there, in abundance.

Sandwiched between *Donor Hunter* and a sex comedy, *The Master Carpenter (Daitoryo)*, by Big Jo, published in the monthly *Bear's Club*, offers history and mystery, as a high school student is dissuaded from carving his initials on a temple pillar by a man who turns out to be a ghost.

The ghost shows the student the workmanship of the temple, shows him the creation of pillars from thousand year old trees. A parallel story offers the family history of a temple workman (who should, in future issues, be revealed as the ghost, although he is now being shown as a descendant), and how his love of the temple buildings was instilled. The drawings of the temples are lovely, with the towering lines of the pillars and the massive, interlocking beams that hold up the gently swooping roofs, and the story carries a rare message of respect. The story skillfully combines tradition and the social pressures of modern Japan's schools.

Prefer a little more action in your tradition? Try the works of Yasuhiko Inous. His recent *Jubei no Ken (Sword of Ken)*, in *Animal House*, is a great reluctant samurai story. There's a surprising paucity of samurai stories in *manga* (with the exception of the sex titles), and most that are printed are somewhere below third-rate. But *Jubei no Ken* is an elegant, moody piece with marvelous action drawings of sword fights, panels of blazing lines and flying body parts mirrored in glimmering swords.

The story itself is quite simple- a man forced to fight when he doesn't want to—but the drawings offer an intense emotional quality to the piece; and with much of the action set against a temple backdrop, there is a quiet irony throughout. Stylistically, Inous wrote most of the dialogue in *kanji*—Chinese characters. This makes it difficult even for the Japanese to read, but it gives the work a distinctly ancient tone. Definitely a top-rank work.

But tradition isn't what's really big here; when most Japanese go to the movies, they go to U.S. action films—*Terminator 2* had lines around the block—and they want the same kind of story in their comics. *Donor Hunter*, *Dog Soldier*, *Bounty Hunter*, *Mad Bull*, and dozens of others (all titled in English) look like storyboards for Stallone's next film.

Perhaps the best—certainly the most popular—in this genre is *City Hunter*, by Tuskasa Hajyo. Already collected in nearly 30 *Tankobon* paperback volumes, the story still runs in the weekly *Shonen Jump*. Short on dialogue, long on chases, *City Hunter* features a team of adventurers out to right the wrongs of the world. Led by Ryo Saeba, who totes an astonishing assortment of weapons, the heroes fight the villains of all descriptons.

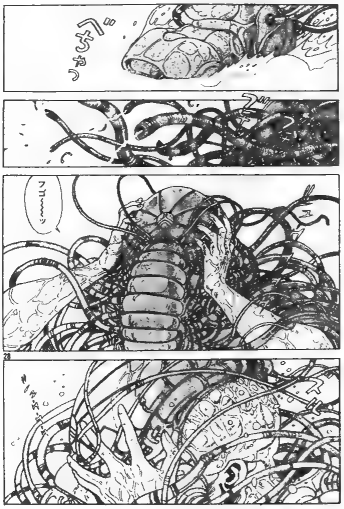
In one particularly tense scene, Ryo saves the life of his teammate by firing bullets straight into the barrel of the bad guy's gun. Somehow, Ryo's bullets do not deform in the air, but this oversight is easily overlooked in Japan, where, much to the credit of the strict gun control laws, even the real-life gangsters use toy guns that have been converted to zip guns.

*City Hunter* has wit and a depth of characterization that's largely missing from the other titles of the same ilk; you can care about what's going on, and with around 6000 pages of the story thus far, the characters are as familiar as your own family. Excellent drawings of facial expressions greatly contribute to the charm of the characters. It's also on TV at least twice a month in half-hour or hour specials.

Japan is the home of hi-tech, and there is no shortage of techno-stories, from the one-shot cyberpunks of *Love Wars* to Jiro Taniguchi's ongoing *Tales of the Melting Earth* (Chijiyu Hiyokai Jiki). This one is rather like *Alien*

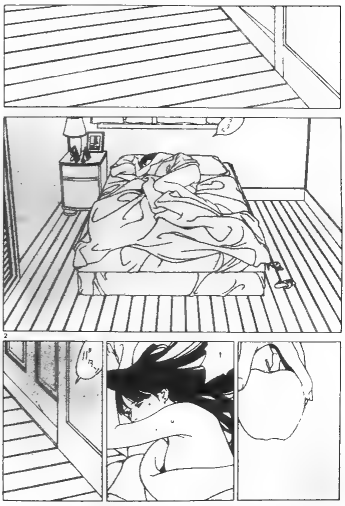
## WHAT YOU'RE MISSING FROM JAPAN

## CHIKIYU HIYOKAI JIKI
*(Tales of the Melting Earth)*
*by Jiro Taniguchi*
*Published in Weekly Comic Morning*



## KUJYAKU O
*(The Peacock King)*
*by Makoto Ogino*
*published in Young Jump*

## SEX
*by Kamijo Atsushi*
*published in Young Sunday*







meets a self-aware computer, and it's full of massive ships and constructs of seething masses of wire that resolve themselves into half-alive forms, with the aid of English words that seem to have been taken at random from a scientific dictionary. (English, whether it makes sense or not, is constantly used in *manga* to add an exotic air.) The story has the tone and images of an impending birth of disaster—countless umbilical hoses and scenes of emergence, leading up to the new creatures that will be challenging the heroes for some time to come.

Although there's no one to compare to Superman, or even the Hulk, there are many super-heroes in Japanese comics. Most of the heroes are of the Batman type—self made—and they are in every corner of the *manga* world. These tend to have a smug air of last minute invincibility, whether the hero is playing baseball (and saving his school from destruction) or driving a car (and saving his company from destruction). They don't carry the moral weight of the Batman, although they are perhaps even more loyal to their causes. Still, they move in very restricted circles.

The powered super-hero has more flexibility. Their powers tend to be somewhat limited, leaving a possibility of vulnerability. This is admirable, but the stories suffer from a shortage of first rate super-villains to challenge the heroes; villains are essentially interchangeable, like the Ban Dai monster of the week on Godzilla-type TV shows that still run here.

One good super-hero now running is the titular character of *The Peacock King (Kujyaku O)*, by Makoto Ogino, in *Young Jump*. The Peacock King can summon the winds and channel them through his hands. With his faithful mutt sidekick, he uses his powers to protect three women, while incidentally saving the world. An early story had him facing a Satanist who had gained power by the ritual sacrifice (carefully drawn over several pages, in great detail) of 11 women. His 12th victim was to be the girl who is a combination love interest/nemesis for the Peacock King.

Ogino offers original, believable monsters, a hero who must struggle to win, and the topicality of the news (the girl works in a TV studio, which provides the backdrop for many scenes). Personally, this is my favorite title, and even after a year, Ogino is still coming up with some unusual devil'tries. From a house made of the possessed souls of businessmen, to a barbed-wire flail-armed Nazi type, Ogino keeps it moving, and his drawing quality has yet to descend to the average depths of sophomore-year *manga*.

The Gulf War made *manga* more than once—the first time before it had actually begun. Yoshinori Inoue draws *Gulf Taki (Gulf Hawk)* for *Young Jump*, and it's easy to see two major hang-ups in the Japanese psyche: first, the machines are drawn more carefully than the people, and there is often technical data straight out of *Janes'* to let you in on the specs for this week's destruction; second, there is not a dark-haired woman to be found in the title; nor one without a centerfold chest that will amazingly stay buttoned safely in its uniform.

Finally, no look at *manga* would be complete without a mention of Kazuhiro Kyochi's *Be Bop High School*, published in *Young Magazine*, and now well past its 200th issue. *Be Bop High School* captured the nation's students from issue one; it's the high school everyone wishes they attended. Western readers may find it too static for their taste—a recent number was simply two uniformed boys squatting in a courtyard and talking about girls—but it's a great reflection of the hopes and dreams of the average Japanese teenager. It should be quite a while before this title finds its ending.

I've only scratched the surface here. The stack of *manga* beside me, a fraction of the available titles, contains more stories than the average U.S. comic shop. But even this small sample should show the depth and variety of manga today. Many single titles are now also popping up as monthlies, offering 200-plus pages of new adventures of a single character who may already be serialized in a dozen paperbacks, as well as appearing in weeklies, and, in all probability, in the movie theater.

Where are they headed in the future? A year ago I'd have told you that there probably won't be any drastic changes; most readers want to know exactly what they're getting before they purchase a particular *manga*. However, new changes have come about that are quite innovative.

Educational topics were getting bigger. More students were boning up on history through *manga*, and a recent series explaining world economics was a bestseller. There were also signs of a *Classic Comics* phase, with the *manga*-ization of Murasaki Shikibu's *Tale of Genji*, arguably the greatest novel in Japanese literature.

Taboo subjects were becoming open to treatment. A biography of the late emperor was hailed as a breakthrough on one side and condemned as sacrilege on the other.

But that was last year, and those were special cases which flourished while mainstream comics came under sudden attack. Early this year, the Japan's national janitor's union protested the treatment of their profession in *Shonen Jump*. The magazine was actually recalled—if you sent your copy back to the publisher, they sent you a souvenir pencil as thanks. Spurred on by the janitors' success, the PTA quickly jumped in with a list of 2000 titles they found offensive; comics immediately began cleaning up their act, and one of the largest publishers, Kodansha, collapsed completely under the pressure and withdrew a controversial title.

There is no doubt that mainstream shops are getting more sedate, at least for the moment. How long these pressures are going to hold up is hard to say; magazines from '90 and '91 look like two different species of animals. This is not to say that the violence and sex are gone, but they are in fast retreat.

Still, that's not going to slow down manga mania. The new issue of *Shonen Jump* hit the stands last Wednesday; On Thursday, there wasn't a copy in sight. •

**WHAT YOU'RE MISSING FROM JAPAN**

VERILY HAVE I WARNED THEE! NOW FACE THE VENGEANCE OF VOLUMINOUS VOLSTA-- WHOAAAOOPS!
THAT LATEST SNACK I HAD SURE STUFFED ME!
CRUNCH!
FAT
THEIR SQUINTING RAT'S EYES SAW ONLY A GIRL OF FIFTEEN; LOST, AFRAID, AMNESIAC...
THEY COULDN'T SEE THE NATURAL GRACE...THE WEALTH OF YOUR SPIRIT...
BUT I...

# X OF A KIND

# 9 HEFTY HEROES AND A HEAVY HEAVY

**By Gary Robinson**

"Let me have men who are fat," says Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's play. "Yon Cassius hath a lean and hungry look." The characters you're about to meet belong to the former, not the latter, group. They're chubby, stout, portly. If you met one of them on the street (and had been having a particularly bad day), you might think, "Lardo!" In a word, they're *fat*. So if you don't like fat people, maybe you'd better skip on to some other article in this magazine—one with a "lean and hungry look."

What are we going to do? Well, I hope we're going to have some fun. Primarily, we're going to dig around in a mixed bag of characters representing decades of four-color fun. Several of these folks are noted for their longevity and popularity. All of them are noted for their obesity. We're going to ask, "What, if anything, makes these charactes appealing?"

Let me introduce you—in some cases, re-introduce you—to some real entertainers. Here, for your reading pleasure, are ten Funnybook Fat Folks.

**1) Whotta Lotta Girl!**

As rendered by the ubiquitous Harvey artist Warren Kremer, Little Lotta was a pear-shaped, pre-pubescent blond in a green and white outfit which accentuated her size. She ate hugely, as you would expect, and the publishers appropriately dubbed her occasional Giant-sized comic *Little Lotta Foodland*. One *Foodland* cover shows pal Little Dot's embarrassment at Lotta's appetite. She's just munched a whole bob-barrel of apples right down to the cores!

Yes, Lotta had a healthy appetite, but she needed to eat to keep up her strength. And what strength! What spinach in particular did for Popeye, food in general did for Lotta. Properly fortified, she could rip a fire hydrant out of the sidewalk. She could knock bad guys clean out of their clothes. In one 1963 story alone, she lifted a car, shot-putted a log across a stream, and took up the slack in her hammock by uprooting a tree. Yet, she never became a super-heroine in the accepted sense of the term. She did try on those garish colors once (all the Harvey characters did at one time or another), but quickly discarded them. Like the above-mentioned Popeye, her strength was never her *raison d'etre* but simply part of her character.

Still, Lotta's muscle did give her a needed edge. Like all fat kids, she occasionally suffered the slings and arrows of cruel children and insensitive adults. Then she'd crash through a wall or something and gain more respect. Nevertheless, she was not invulnerable to insults. Gawky, overweight, or otherwise misfit children could identify with her. Her writers never treated her contemptuously, and that must explain why she's still around today. We know we've got a friend in Little Lotta.

**2) The Short, Round Show-Off**

Now here's a little fellow who didn't care what you called him—as long as you didn't call him to supper late! Inspired by the obligatory fat kid in the kid gang movies of the '30s and '40s, John Stanley's Tubby went his screen counterparts one better. He was not dull, nor slow-witted, and, though it was a high priority, food was not the only thing on his mind. For Tubby was a commander in the great war between kids and adults in general and boys and girls in particular. Like Tracy and Hepburn, Grant and Dunne, when Tubby Tompkins and Little Lulu matched wits, they created a legend.

Rarely will you find a more self-possessed character in comics. No one could shake Tubby's composure —no adult, at least. In his guise as The Spider, he considered himself the unfailing nemesis of crime, the ultimate detective. What did it matter that the crime was innocuous—the theft of a doll, for example? What difference did it make that many times there was no mystery at all? The Spider knows! There was always a culprit to be caught, usually Lulu's unsuspecting father. Only after driving the poor old man to apoplexy did Tubby consider his work done. And . . ."The Spider spins again!"

He was not always so lucky, however, in the Battle of the Sexes. He and Lulu were well-matched opponents, scoring hilarious points off each other issue after issue. Usually, though, Tubby and his gang were the agressors, Lulu and the buck-toothed, frizzle-topped Annie the victims—until the tide turned, that is. Then Lulu wreaked her vengeance in high style.

In "Girl Bites Boy" (*Little Lulu* #86. 1955), Tubby's desire for a kiss from the stunning little Gloria is exceeded only by his need to show off. He two-times Lulu, encouraging her to sell kisses, then suggesting the same scheme to Gloria. While the little Lothario makes time with the blond not five feet away from Lulu's own kissing station, the woman scorned prepares delightful revenge. She lies snoring on a crate beneath this sign: "The Boy Whose Kiss Wakes Up Snow White Will Never Fail to Get a

Bite." A bite of what, the boys wonder? Ice cream? Vain Tubby soon disovers the painful, predictable answer.

Tubby usually suffered whenever his appetites for food, glory, or Gloria betrayed him. But none of Stanley's kid creations was perfect. There in lies their charm. Tubby foreshadowed Bill Watterson's Calvin in that his schemes and pursuits were all recognizably childish. Although Tubby could be a real pain to his folks and to Lulu, the chaos he created was never very far from reality.

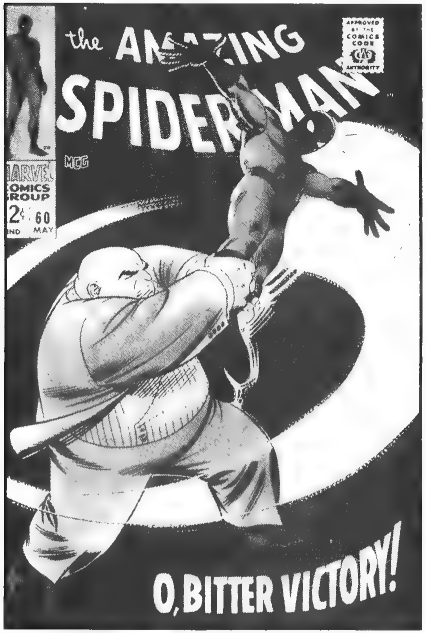
Round with desire, firm with determination, fully packed with life, Tubby remains a viable character. It's a crime that his and Lulu's adventures aren't available in an inexpensive format.

### 3) Beck's Big Boy

In the tradition of Don Diego and Bruce Wayne, gentle, overweight orchid fancier Van Crawford affected disdain for physical exertion. He embarrassed his parents with his prodigious appetite for food, flowers, and fooishness. But when need arose, Van pulled open his shirt and revealed a green outfit stretched tight over his considerable torso, with a yellow flying saucer on the front. In costume, he had no super powers but displayed remarkable agility and better than average strength. But were these the end of his endowments? No! For a grateful alien had granted him the power to become a literal flying saucer! So now, not only could Van tip the scales against crime as Fatman, he could also reach soaring heights of action as The Human Flying Saucer.

Even though he ran just three issues, Fatman developed a loyal following and today commands the respect of historians and pros alike, for he was lovingly rendered by two comic greats, Otto Binder and C.C. Beck. Years had passed since the demise of their most famous creation, the original Captain Marvel, but the team had lost none of its wit or verve.

Whhhhhheeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!




Fatman was, and still is, a ton of fun.

In the first issue (April, 1967), a 64-page comic that could be had for *choke* twenty-five cents, Binder and Beck gave readers their money's worth and a whole lot more. Besides the usual origin and first-tryout-of-powers sequence, #1 featured Fatman's first real challenge, the "Anti-Man, Enemy of Mankind". Anti-Man, a hideous sea creature out to conquer the surface world, proves to much for our hero. He needs an ally and finds one in Lucius Pindle, aka Tin Man. This skinny, metallic counterpoint to the obese Van Crawford was a wonderfully conceived character, a human missile to soar alongside The Human Flying Saucer.

Fatman referees as Tin Man and Anti-Man battle on a tiny island. Their four-page fight climaxes in an atomic explosion—and a draw. Anti-Man is about to join forces with the good guys when a force which not even he can withstand confronts him—Mrs. Anti-Man! "Finneus, you miserable Tadpole! At last, I've found you! Come on home, you under-sized shrimp! Our 5000 children are crying for their supper! They'll need at least 6 whales and 11 giant squids to quiet them!" Tucked under his spouse's enormous arm, Anti-Man conveys his regrets to his new friends.

In his breezy commentary on the Golden Age, *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, Jules Feiffer complained that, as Captain Marvel neared the end of his career, he started getting fleshy. I like to think that he was just starting to disguise himself, putting on weight so that he could return to delight us without fear of a litigious Superman. Unfortunately, the spirit of the original Captain resurfaced only briefly in Fatman. He arrived too late. The sixties super-hero boom was about to go bust, and The Human Flying Saucer was most regrettably grounded. Cherish your back issues if you have them, or look for the recent A-Plus reprints!

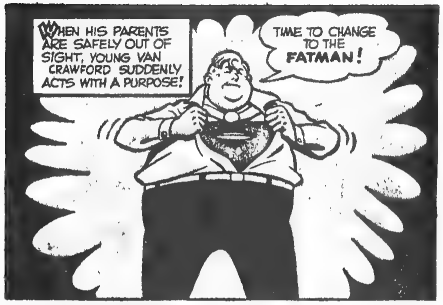
### 4) Little Fat Nothing

Herbie Popnecker. The ultimate Fat Boy. The creation of writer Richard Hughes (usually going under the penname, Shane O'Shea) and artist Ogden Whitney, this Little Fat Nothing became a Big Fat Something in the world of comics. He appeared full-blown, so to speak, in a 1958 issue of the ACG title *Forbidden Worlds*. Hughes never intended the feature to be anything more than a one-shot, but the fans demanded Popnecker's return, so in 1961 he rolled into *Forbidden Worlds* once more. Two years later, he appeared again in the same book, and four months later he had his own title, *Herbie* which continued until 1967.

It's difficult for X-hardened, Dark



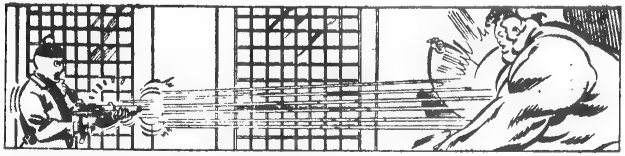
## TONS OF FAT HEROES:




Otto Binder and C.C. Beck's Fatman

Shane O'Shea & Ogden Whitney's "Fat Little Nothing," Herbie Poopnecker.

DC's Chuck Taine, Bouncing Boy of the Legion of Super-Heroes.



Marvel's rarely-seen Big Bertha of the Great Lakes Avengers.

"SSK—"SSK—"SSK!
CLEANER ANN YOU'VE BEEN ABOVE A NAUGHTY LITTLE GIRL! TELLING ALL THE DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS OF SOHNA WOMEN!
NOW PEARL TOLD YOU EVERYTHING WOULD BE JUST FINE IF ONLY YOU'D KEEP YOUR NOSE OUT OF PEARL'S BUSINESS!
PEARL'S BUSINESS?!? IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, LADY, THIS CIRCUS HAPPENS TO BE MY BUSINESS!

John Byrne's fat lady villainess, Pink Pearl, introduced in *Alpha Flight*.

Knight-dulled fans to understand the appeal of, in Bob Hughes' words, a character with "a Moe Howard haircut, a speech pattern that makes the Hulk seem loquacious, and a glassy-eyed stare that could curdle anti-freeze" (*Amazing Heroes* #173). But the lovers of this lard-laden lout are legion. For Herbie needed no chiseled body, no constricting secret identity in order to perform. He was completely at home with himself, and if somebody happened not to like him, why, that was *that* guy's problem. Herbie would just shrug, shift the ever-present lollipop in his mouth, and go on about his business. He wooed no one, pleased nobody but himself, and consequently won the admiration of presidents and movie stars, lions and gorillas, readers and fans.

Not that Herbie was a self-absorbed brat—far from it! He was quite altruistic. He just didn't need to prove it month after month like Superman. He had supernatural powers, but, heck, they were no big deal. Like E. C. Segar's Popeye, he felt no need to crouch upon moonlit roof tops looking for nefarious activities to leap down upon and smash. Segar's Old Salt loved the sea and his family. He had a life. So did Richard Hughes' creation. Herbie loved lollipops and, incredibly, his father.

A story from 1965 illustrates the strange loving concern Herbie felt for this pompous, abusive man. As "Pincus Popnecker, Private Eye" (*Herbie* #12), forever-ambitious Dad sets off on the trail of a fat-thief, i.e., the purloiner of others' poundage. He shakes a finger at his reclining son and declares, "By George, I'm a live wire. Not a little fat nothing like *you*, you little fat nothing!" Mom is worried; Pincus will hurt himself. So Herbie follows Pop, observing his investigative ineptitude and surreptiously saving him from harm. When Pincus gives up, calling himself "almost as bad as Herbie," his son still cares enough to build up his father's ego. Herbie catches the thief (who tries, hilariously, to eat Herbie in order to get fat) and gives the credit to ol' Pop, who remains as ignorant and ungrateful as ever.

Odd behavior? Sure. But then, Herbie broke all the rules. He talked to animals and travelled in time. He walked through the air like a perpendicular zeppelin. Beautiful women swooned over his blubber, but he spurned their love, preferring suckers instead. He liked being fat. That cultured lard of his was a symbol of Hughes and Whitney's approach. Herbie's avoirdupois suggested the world with all its satire, spontaneity, and absurdity. In his book, there was room for anything and everything.

Herbie offered welcome comic relief from the *Sturm und Drang* of the '60s. Thankfully, he's back in a reprint format from A-Plus. Now a new generation can discover that Fat is definitely Where It's At.

### 5) Lardo From Lomax

Every once in a while, a hero comes along who, though short-lived, leaves his indelible mark. He is special. His adventures, though few, reverberate through time; his legend grows.

Captain Obese is *not* such a hero. He is perhaps the most eminently forgettable member of the group under discussion. I will say this for him, though, he was a tub of lard.

He appeared in the first issue of the anthology comic *FantaSci* (1986), which lumbered along for nine issues before slipping from sight. His origin is as follows: Fat slob Milman Trite receives a visit from the beautiful Oshna of Awe San Tan and an offer he can't refuse. If he will come with her, he can be the Great Protector of her realm. Of course, Milman can't refuse the offer; he must either become a super-hero or else stand trial for a murder he didn't commit. In the city of Redundant, Trite receives no special powers, but he does get a ring which amplifies his emotions. The only problem is that Milman can't control the ring. Rather than become ten times as brave, he might end up ten times as terrified. So the Great Protector depends sometimes on his intellect, more often on his luck, to get him out of the scrapes heroes are heir to.

This satirical fantasy never quite got off the ground. The problem with satire is that it makes its point rather quickly. We all know how ridiculous cape-clad heroes really are (we do, don't we?). A fat slob got up in canary yellow tights easily gets the point across. Why buy more than one issue, then? Again, mention of the "Mirk-Mire Swamp-Nads" and the "Mud-Hole Maggot Suckers" is funny—in the short run. After a while, however, it gets tired and tiresome. Don Lomax was a talented artist and a competent writer, but all he had to say in "The Heavy Adventures of Captain Obese" month after month was, "See the fat guy. See the stupid situation." There was no sense of wonder of fun, only the smell of quick-drying shellac.

And yet Milman did have one thing going for him—the love and affection of that shapely elf Oshna. If his adventures proved nothing else, they certainly reiterated the old adge, "Love is blind".

### 6) Follow the Bouncing Ball

Height: 5'8".
Weight: 221 lbs.
Occupation: Instructor.

That is, he's *currently* an instructor. Before he retired from active duty, Chuck Taine, aka Bouncing Boy, was (or should we say, will be?) a springing, bounding beachball in the 30th century war against crime. As a member of the Legion of Super-Heroes, he changed his blubber into rubber and rubbed baddies the wrong way.

*Adventure Comics* #301 (1962) carries his origin. While watching a Robot Gladitator match, chubby, cowlicked Chuck reaches for his pop bottle. He forgets, however, that he also has with him a bottle of super-plastic fluid. "Ugh!" grimaces Chuck. "This soda pop tastes awful!—ULP!" Looks like the world will have to get along without that formula Chuck was supposed to deliver to the Science Council. Instead, the world now has... Bouncing Boy! Only, the world doesn't want him, nor does the Legion. His spongy rotundity serves no practical use.

But couldn't Cosmic Boy or Saturn Girl conceive of a villain who might possibly use electricity as a weapon? Couldn't they see the value of non-conducting *rubber* in such a case? Don't be silly. If they did, we'd have no story! The predictable occurs. Chuck springs into action and has a ball. The Legion adds Bouncing Boy to the roster and becomes a well-rounded group.

Always a cheerful, helpful guy, Bouncing Boy never took himself or his ridiculous power seriously. And, for a fat person, Chuck Taine went through life remarkably free and easy. Very few made cracks about his bulging waistline; very few cared. Chuck himself certainly didn't. In *Superboy* #200 (1974), he married the self-duplicating Duo Damsel, a slim, lovely girl (or two) who never nagged Bouncing Boy about his bounce. Whether the writers consciously detoured the subject of heft or else forgot about it, the point was never the less made: It's the soul, not the body, that counts.

### 7) Heaviest of Heavies

Today, many people associate fat with failure. Just a century ago, however, a bulging belly symbolized power and wealth. Witness Diamond Jim Brady, for example. Wilson Fisk, the corpulent corporate Caligula of comic books, continues the old tradition. His vast bulk throws its shadow over a nationwide network of evil. The Kingpin rules!

He first appeared in *Spider-Man* #50 (1967), beginning a tumultuous saga of fortunes and failures in crime. A self-confessed "unhappy, blubbery child," young Fisk trained himself in all forms of physical combat, transforming his weight into a weapon. As his criminal organization grew, he married a woman named Vanessa who never developed a taste for her husband's business tactics. Eventually exposed by Spider-Man, threatened with his wife's abandonment, the Kingpin retired to Japan. For a while.

When he resurfaced, he worked his evil machinations in the world of politics. His puppet mayoral candidate almost won the New York election. A new fly in the ointment, Daredevil, used Vanesa to stop Fisk. Since the early '80s, the implacable crimelord has battled The Man Without Fear, most memorably in the stories of Frank Miller (e.g., *Daredevil* #227-233).

Some question remains whether the Kingpin's bulk is muscle or fat. *Marvel Universe* asserts the former, yet it's difficult to see how a man grown so large and portly can be completely solid. More than likely, the Kingpin's body contains both the solid sinew and the soft adipose tissue of a pro-wrestler. Like those usually lardy grapplers, Fisk has simply learned how to use his weight to the best advantage.

Not that I'd tell *him* that. Soft or solid, this is one guy who really knows how to throw his weight around.

### 8) Heftiest of Heroines

Admittedly, this article is light on heavy females. That's because there aren't many to chose from. Oh, you can find *some*—usually villainesses like Pink Pearl of *Alpha Flight* or the horrendous Fat Lady from the recent *Deadman* mini-series. But good girls of girth are hard to find.

Why is that? Here we must delve a little into the sociological aspects of obesity. Briefly, our society views large women with contempt. What we condone in males as mere over-indulgence, we condemn in females

The Fat Lady from the *Deadman* series. You don't want to know what she just ate.

as some sort of moral failure. In America, getting fat is one of the last great sins. If you're female, however, and happen to put on weight, you've committed the *Mortal* Sin. Comic books reflect that distorted societal view like any other popular medium. Thus, for every fat heroine like Big Bertha, there are three fat villainesses like The Draggin' Lady (see *Popeye* #1, 1987, Ocean Comics).

Big Bertha, a member of the misfit super-group, The Great Lakes Avengers, moves like a mountain against crime. To date, her neatest trick has been a twist on Superman's old "Bullets Bounce Off Me" standby. The crook shoots her several times. The bullets sink into her considrable flesh. Then, when inertia runs out, they pop back out of her, stinging the gunman on the return trip—delightful. Crime-fighting hasn't looked so fun in years. Freely rendered by John Byrne, Big Bertha flings her fat form with abandon, heedless of how she looks.

But then, she doesn't really have to worry about her looks. For she can return to a swanky penthouse and the svelte form of former super-model Ashley Crawford and time she wants. Fat is just her disguise, thin is her reality.

If that isn't the wish/fanatasy of many an overweight person, I don't know what is. So far, Bertha has appeared in only two issues of *Avengers West Coast* (#'s 46 and 49. If I've missed her elsewhere, please let me know.). I don't know about you, but I'd like to see her in action again.

### 9) Voluminous Volstagg

We began with young fat characters. We'll wrap up with old fat characters. In his prime, Volstagg, "The Lion of Asgard" could lift forty tons. Now, the aging warrior, referred to by his wife as a "round-rumped roll of jelly," can raise but thirty-five. *Tch*. Give the poor old fellow a break, though; he caries an even greater weight of family responsibility.

He first loomed large as a swashbuckling member of The Warriors Three in *Journey into Mystery* #119. Along with his fellow Norse gods Fandral and Hogun, Volstagg engaged in rollicking adventures in Asgard. A sort of overstuffed Don Quixote, Volstagg holds a rather over-inflated opinon of himself and his abilites. He refuses to acknowledge the passing of time—until he comes home to his nagging wife Godrun and Katzenjammer-like kids. Needless to say, he spends as little time with this brood as possible.

In *Marvel Fanfare* #34, Alan Zelenetz and Charles Vess served a delightful slice of "Life With Volstagg". The big bumbler, as dogged in his pursuit of catastrophe as Peter Sellers' Inspector Clouseau, continually jumps from the frying pan into the fire. He tries for a moment's respite at a local inn, but only succeeds in angering the other patrons whose mead he innocently drinks up. "Blame him!" cries the innkeeper. "Sir Portly Stout over there's drained my barrels to the last draught." A kinder, gentler customer says, "I say we gut the porker."

Yet Volstagg survives the assault. And it looks like he'll live to fight more battles.

### 10) Broad-Faced and Round-Bellied

Rounding out the list, so to speak, is a character so recognizable, so beloved, so universally appealing, it's ironic he should find himself in a list of mere comic book characters—ironic, if not unjust. Yet, not only has he appeared in more separate comic book titles than any member of the group we're discussing (to say nothing of the fact that he has been in more titles than *any* comics character), he is a true stout fellow, stoutest of them all in girth, mirth, and worth. Ladies and gentlemen, I take great pleasure in re-introducing to you your childhood friend—Yes, Virginia, here he is—Santa Claus!

His powers make Superman look sick, his knowledge of who's naughty and nice puts Batman in the shade. His fantastic workshop, swifter-than-light reindeer, and splendid red outfit make him a natural for comic books. It should come as no surprise, then, that Santa has appeared in over 40 separate titles bearing his name. Of course, many of these were promotional one-shots and department store giveaways. Still, assisted by the great Walt Kelly, he kept Dell's *Santa Claus Funnies* running for almost twenty years (1942-1961).

Do you want to talk about comic book crossovers? Santa practically invented them! Company labels meant nothing to him, and characters from Dell to DC welcomed the sound of his reindeer on their roofs. In 1949 (*Walt Disney's Christmas Parade #1*), he showed Donald Duck and his nephews how he comes down all those chimneys regardless of size. He learned an easier way, you see, a couple of years earlier, after Superman had to help him trim down enough to execute his most famous maneuver (*Action* #105). In more recent years, Santa has visited in such places as *DC Comics Presents*, *Spectacular Spider-Man*, and *Sensational She-Hulk*.

Tired writers and artists relish his yuletide visits. They change him little from episode to episode. Oh, sometimes he's a little taller, a little shorter; that "little round belly" shrinks or grows at an artist's whim. Of course, he's kept up with modern technology and uses computers in his state-of-the-art toyshop. But the man himself remains genial and generous. Church groups will change the Bible, but nobody messes with Santa Claus.

Superman show signs of age. Kids no longer care whether he flies or not. But the stout old gentleman in the red suit will eat cookies as long as he pleases and still be loved. Neither cholesterol nor time will ever do him in.

Although I stuck an extra section in the table to accomodate all our guests, there just wasn't room for everybody. I've probably turned away some fatty for whom you have a soft spot, The Blimp, say, from DC's *Inferior Five* or Marvel's the Blob. There was a *Secret Wars* villainess named Magma and a *D.P. 7* operative codenamed Sponge. Should we forget The Fat Ninja? Yes, we should. I don't want to forget *Love and Rockets* Maggie, however, whose battle of the bulge came closer to reality than any other comics character's. (If some of you are miffed over her omission, let me say that I never review comics with more than three scatological references per page.)

So much for the also-rans. What about the winners? Why did I pick the particular characters I did? What makes them so special? I'm glad you asked!

First, they're special because of the subtle lessons they teach. We've already noted how soul, not body, matters. Also, that love is unpredictable. Still another lesson Herbie, Chuck Taine and the rest teach is Don't Take Yourself So Seriously. Self-acceptance, not dieting, is the key to happiness.

Secondly, the group we've considered represents the best in comic books. They remind us of what we shell out our hard-earned money for: Good writing, such as the wildly diverse talents of John Stanley and Frank Miller exemplify. Striking visuals, even those which depict a minor character like Big Bertha. This bunch packs the visual punch comics are supposed to.

Finally, the characters I picked (or most of them, anyway) are characters we'll remember. They're striking, accessible, funny. They're people we can identify with. They break the stiff, stalwart, and stultifying mold and show the reader a good time.

Proverbs 23:2 says, "Put a knife to your throat if you are a man of great appetite." Far be it from me to go against Holy Writ, but... Herbie *don't you dare!*

*(Special thanks to John Pierce and Tom Mattevi for their invaluable help in preparing this article.)* ●



# INFERNAL GALL

## THERE BUT FOR FORTUNE COOKIES

**by Adam-Troy Castro**

Hi, there.

I ate in a Chinese restaurant today. Which might not be an interesting fact all by itself, except for those of you keeping detailed diaries about the culinary habits of the *AH* staff, but anyway. While I was there I opened a fortune cookie that contained the following:

*A smile is your welcome mat.*

Now, you might mistake this for a heartwarming philosophy about the importance of reaching out to people: the sort of thing the Care Bears were trying so hard to tell us.

But folks who write fortune cookies for a living must be incredibly bitter and cynical people. . .because, if you think about it, this is what those six words REALLY mean:

*Nice guys get stepped on.*

Which brings us to—

### Great Moments in Exhaustive Research

I have in my hands a 1992 appointment book, published and distributed by the Myron Manufacturing Corporation of Maywood, New Jersey. You know what it looks like: a little booklet, just small enough to fit in the breast pocket of a business suit, where you can write all your important memoranda for the next year. This one's called a Pocket Pal, and the folks who produce it send free samples to small businesses all over the country, hoping that whoever makes the decisions about such things will be sufficiently impressed to order a large number embossed with the company name.

The gimmick of this particular appointment book is that every page is headed by a cogent quote from one of the World's Great Thinkers. Thus, we have Plato: "At the touch of love, everyone becomes a poet." Dale Carnegie: "Any fool can criticize, condemn and complam—and most do." Mark Twain: "There ain't no surer way to find out whether you like people or hate them than to travel with them." Dwight D. Eisenhower: "A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both." Len Wein: "A true friend is someone who is there for you when he'd rather be anywhere else." John Steinbeck—

—SCREEEEEECH. Put that car in reverse, boy, I just saw something strange and furry lurking in the scenery.

Yeah, that's right. Len Wein. Co-creator of the Swamp Thing, first writer of the revived X-Men, and until recently editor-in-chief of Disney Comics. That Len Wein. A nice guy, and a man with a fairly distinguished career in comics, but still, not exactly Plato or Steinbeck. How did he get to join this exclusive club?

Well, here's the scoop, direct from Wein himself. It seems he has a friend who was so impressed when Wein uttered that little nugget of wisdom in everyday conversation that he immediately wrote it down and sent it in to Reader's Digest, which ran it in

Len Wein: writer, editor, colleague to Plato, comic book character. . .

"AND THAT'S A GREAT IDEA!"
YOU BE OKAY NOW, BEARS.
DADDY GO SLEEP FOR A WHILE AND NOT KNOW WHY? BUT HE ALL BETTER NOW.
AND DADDY PROTECT YOU LIKE ALWAYS.
EN-LWEN
HEY, B'R EN-LWEN
OH
S-WIDE LOAD ANNIE!
HELLO WIDE LOAD ANNIE! EN-LWEN GLAD TO SEE YOU
WHAT T'IS?
C'MON ALONG WITH ME, EN-LWEN
WE'VE GOT A PRESENT FOR YOU.
PRESENT FOR EN-LWEN?
WHAT T'
OH!
WHAT GREAT BEAR!
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, WIDE LOAD ANNIE!
EN-LWEN WILL LOVE HIM FOREVER!
UNHAND M'MMPH!!

their column of "Quotable Quotes." The Myron Manufacturing Corporation apparently filched it, and all the other aphorisms, from there.

Which is interesting only because it shows just how erudite the Research Department of the Myron Manufacturing Corporaton must be. No endless hours poring over the great classics of world literature for THOSE fast-track yuppies. Nope. Give them a shelf of the past year's *Reader's Digest* and they're all set.

I mean, jeez. At least Sidney Mellon had enough class to use *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*.

### Things I Wonder About

You know those scenes, in both movies and comics, where the lone gunslinger comes out of a sweltering hot desert, after four or five days on a horse, wearing the same clothes he's been wearing since the last town, and smoking a cigar? You know how all the ladies think he's incredibly attractive? Y'ever wonder how come they don't immediately pass out from his stench?

Is the reason "The engines cannae take it any more, Captain" that Scotty the engineer just plain ain't good at his job? If the Federation put somebody competent in that position would all those battles with the Klingons have been won a lot sooner? How come Captain Kirk never told him that nobody likes a whiner? And why did he say "I cannae break the laws of Physics!" when, from all available evidence, it seemed to be his job description?

Before they start digging foundations for major office buildings, do real estate developers in the Marvel Universe have to prod the ground with a stick to find a place that doesn't have a supervillian's hideout? What would happen if two supervillains tried to put their secret hideouts in the same place? If they both thought it was the perfect location, and they both refused to budge? Would they go to Judge Wapner?

And speaking of hideouts, you ever wonder about all those faceless guys in the white lab coats who get knocked over the edge of catwalks in the last twenty minutes of James Bond movies? Just what are they doing with all those clipboards anyway? What are they writing down? Who are they supposed to show it to? If the major bad guy stopped petting his fershlugginer cat long enough to actually read what was on those clipboards, would he find out a way to keep his vast underground hideout from blowing up in the first place?

And speaking of James Bond, just what kind of secret agent immediately introduces himself to every single person he meets? By his real name, no less? Repeating it with great care so everybody knows how to spell it? Is he so incompetent he's unable to find the bad guys unless they first make spectacular attempts on his life?

What about Q—not the *Star Trek* villain, but the old guy who supplies Bond with stuff like martini glass land mines and cigarette case grenade launchers? Is he ever peeved that *his* job doesn't include an unlimited expense account to pay for room service at lavish hotels on the French Riviera? And how did he get that job anyway? What were his qualifications—not laughing during his first interview? If he decided to quit and pursue an entirely different line of work, how could he possibly come up with a resume that didn't make potential employers want to check his urine for traces of dangerous hallucinogens?

Does Stan Lee ever yell "Excelsior!" during sex?

Does Fred Hembeck really have curlicues on his elbows?

Considering what even the most responsible crime reporting in Gotham City must read like, just what kind of story do the cheap sleazy tabloids run? And what kind of suicidal idiot would accept a job as an art museum guard in that town anyway? Actually, why do the curators of other museums from across the country and around the world persist in loaning Gotham City art museums rare historical treasures that they know from experience will always be stolen by some super-villain within twenty-four hours anyway?

Has Snoopy been fixed? What about Linus?

Just what, specifically, is that checkerboard pattern on the side of Archie's head supposed to be anyway? Does anybody out there know even a single person whose hair behaves that way?

What was the exact I.Q. of those bad guys in the *Superman* TV shows from the '50s? The ones who shot the Man of Steel six times in the chest, saw the bullets bounce off without noticeable effect, then ran out of ammunition and *threw their guns at him*, in the apparent belief that their right arms might succeed where gunpowder failed? Was Superman ever, even *once*, so flabbergasted with the stupidity of such crooks that he shouted "Ow!" and pretended to be knocked unconscious by the hurled gun, just for the sake of playing with their heads? And did all the crooks who tried this insane tactic then spend their entire prison terms muttering "Dumb, Dumb, Dumb?" [*You forgot the best part, Adam—he always ducks when they throw the gun!—TH*]

How come Dagwood Bumstead never hired a lawyer to sue his boss Mr. Dithers for repeatedly beating him up at work? Does he live in an alternate universe where all the labor laws have been written by Republicans?

If you're a student in Indiana Jones' college archeology class, just what kind of research are you expected to do for your term paper? Do you have to fly to Africa, get shot at by Nazis, and survive the wrath of God just to bring up your grade point average? Assuming you *did* kill a thousand Nazis, find the final resting place of Noah's Ark, and hand in your term paper on time, would Indy flunk you just because you didn't properly annotate all your footnotes? If you came back with nothing but a T-shirt from the novelty shop at the Cairo airport, but you're the only one who came back at all because all your classmates have been killed in various horrible ways, would you still get an F, or does Professor Jones grade on the curve?

If fans who only read comics about mutant super-heroes are Marvel Zombies, are folks who read nothing but *American Splendor* Pekarheads? And were Mr. Pekar and Reid Fleming, the World's Toughest Milkman, Separated at Birth?

How come the Robinson family never tossed Dr. Smith out the airlock? How many times were they prepared to give him one last chance? And how come they never encountered the Enterprise Crew on their all-purpose planet of shapeless orange rocks?

If Dr. Smith, Gilligan, Ed Norton, and Stan Laurel were all trapped in a room together, with one clearly marked exit in plain sight, would they manage to find it? If they had to resort to cannibalism to survive, who'd be the last to go? [*Yes, they could find their way out, but only if Huntz Hall, Gomer Pyle, Ernest P. Worrell and Ed Grimley were on the outside coaching them, and that's the last interruption, I promise—TH*]

Is there some sinister reason B.D. from *Doonesbury* never takes off his helmet? Did his soft spot never stitch together or what?

When Bob Kane created Courageous Cat and Minute Mouse, did he know that he was repeating himself? Or did he think he was blazing uncharted creative territory? If it's ever made into a movie, will Bob Hoskins play the Frog? If somebody like John Landis is hired to direct, will fans of the show start an angry letter writing campaign because their hero isn't being taken seriously?

Does Wolverine ever pop his claws by accident? Like when he's picking his nose, for instance?

Is there some reason why nobody in the Marvel Universe notices that one of New York's leading newspapers is run by a guy so out of touch that he's still wearing a Hitler moustache in 1991?

If the Silver Surfer's skin is just a protective coating Galactus gave him to shield him from the harsh conditions of outer space, then how come his intestines don't explode out his mouth the first time he starts making one of his interminable angst-ridden monologues? And speaking of Galactus—does he leave a trail of freshly formed nebulas every time he eats a gassy meal?

Finally, does Rubik get royalties from Clive Barker?

### Why You Don't Have To Be Able To Lay Eggs in Order To Smell Rotten Ones

Otherwise known as "Let's alienate Donna Barr even more."

Not that I want to. Donna's a talented, idiosyncratic cartoonist who absolutely deserves her cult following, and more. From everything I've heard, she's also an extremely likable person. My one discordant memory of the time she got mysteriously hissy about a review I gave one of her comics—a highly positive review, at that—doesn't change the fact that I don't really want to offend her even once when there are so many other people I haven't offended even once who really do deserve to be offended as often as possible.

With that said, I must *also* report that, like the rest of us, she's also capable of saying extremely stupid things in print. Take her "Perspective" column in AH #194, which castigates comic book reviewers for daring to pass judgement on cartoonists when they've never tried cartooning themselves. She even says, "To really get the *feel*, how about *you* try finishing a 20-pager—writing, art, lettering, the cover, the *works*—in a week? You'd be gentler in the future—and the creators would respect the attempt!"

The implication is that reviewers will be nicer once they know how hard cartooning is.

What Donna should be intelligent enough to know is that it doesn't *matter* how hard the cartoonist worked.

Look. When I read a novel it doesn't matter to me whether the writer whipped it out in two weeks or spent twenty years polishing every last semicolon. Some writers can spend twenty years on a book and still produce horrid pieces of crap; others can produce award-winning prose as quickly as they can type. The only relevant distinction is the quality of the printed page. That's *all*. And this is *especially* true in comics, where the majority of professional creators are working on strict deadlines, and all too many hacks get regular work *despite* the crudiness of their work *only* because they work hard enough to always meet those deadlines.

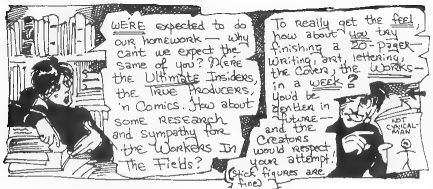
As a quality alternative cartoonist with a limited audience, Donna already knows everything I've just said quite well. But she's really using a hackneyed old argument used by creators who think they've burned by critics—i.e., "Well, if critics know so damn much then how come *they* don't try it?"

In other words, rock critics should all start their own bands; theater critics should put on productions of *Hamlet*; and movie critics should make $40-million historical epics, before they're qualified to pass judgement on other people.

It's a ridiculous argument. Criticism is itself an art, which requires a certain specific set of talents, and can be done either well or abominably, depending on the skill of the critic involved. Some critics are equally ac-

Reid Fleming and Harvey Pekar: Separated At Birth?

"Oooooh, I *hate* when that happens."


WERE expected to do our homework — why can't we expect the same of you? Where the Ultimate Insiders, the True Producers, in Comics. How about some RESEARCH and Sympathy for the Workers In the Fields?
To really get the feel how about you try finishing a 22-page writing and lettering the COMICS in a WEEK? You'd be zapped in the future — and the Creators would respect your attempt.
(Stick figures are)
NO SOCIAL MAN

Another installment of Barr Wars II.

complished in other fields: witness my fave rave Mark Twain, whose "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses" is still the all-times greatest essay on the difference between good and bad writing. But there's nothing wrong with being a perceptive critic who fails to excel at the same field he comments on: as per Roger Ebert, who's a fair-to-middling movie reviewer, absolutely worth following, but demonstrably one of the worst screenwriters in the history of the planet. Or for that matter, Ms. Barr herself—her comics are charming, but if her "Perspective" is any indication, her criticism is unfair, illogical, and entirely beside the point.

To her I respond: Donna, there are quite a few comic book critics out there. Some are very good, others are insufferable dorks. You won't discern the difference between us by seeing who can last a week working in your particular vineyard. But you might understand the difficulties involved a little better if you accepted some review assignments yourself. To paraphrase your own words, "Anything else is a mis-service to the reader, an injustice to the critic—and will, in the long run, make you look damn silly. Okay? Danke."

### Masterpiece of the Month

"Bitsy Bitch Goes to School," by Roberta Gregory, from *Naughty Bits* #3 (Fantagraphics, $2.25). A searing portrait of one day in the life of a typical little girl—one unrelentingly NIGHTMARISH day, that catalogues every major reason why childhood is hell. Gregory doesn't fudge things by making her protagonist a wide-eyed innocent: she makes it quite clear that this little girl is herself capable of savagery as despicable as what we see from her incredibly mean-spirited peers. Reading this story can save you years of therapy by bringing out all those memories you had repressed. It's powerful, affecting, and funny as hell. Adam-Troy says check it out.

The Sweet Innocence of Childhood, as seen in *Naughty Bits* #3.

### A Quickie Recommendation Totally Unrelated to Comics

*Buffalo Girls* by Larry McMurtry (Pocket Books, $5.99). The author of *Lonesome Dove* checks in with this sad and funny western about the last days of Calamity Jane. This one sneaks up on you, gang. You'll enjoy reading it, because the characters are terrific, and the writing wonderful, but because of its wonky tone and sedate pacing you'll spend the bulk of its 344 pages arrogantly assuming that you can emotionally handle any surprise McMurtry has in store for you. Don't you believe it. Because though you'll enjoy the first 322 pages too much to notice, McMurtry spends them secretly planting one whopper of a land mine—and just when you think you have the book completely figured out, the last chapter rolls around and calmly blows your legs out from under you. A *definite* must-read, people. Pick it up and say hello to No Ears for me.

### Shameless Self-Promotion Department

My short story "Clearance to Land" has just been reprinted again, in an anthology called *Quick Chills II: Best Horror Stories From the Small Press*, as edited by Peter Enfantino and Bob Morrish (publisher: Deadline Press). It's a pricey limited edition hardcover signed by all the authors, available through specialty bookstores. Check it out.

Well, that's about all we have room for this time out. This installment is dedicated to the memory of Theodore Geisel and Gene Roddenberry. Special thanks to Chas. Gillen, who provided this column's new logo illustration, for suggesting the Superman observation. I remind you once again that this column still welcomes intelligible correspondence at P.O. Box 461, Hartsdale, NY 10530-0461. I don't promise (or rule out) personal replies, but I will try to respond to all interesting comments in the pages of an upcoming "Lazy-Butt Mailbag" installment. As always, letters specifically intended for publication, or letters complaining about Andy Mangels, should be sent to "Amazing Readers."

Just kidding, Andy. I just wanted to see if anybody out there was still reading that paragraph.

### Next Month

The topic is still up in the air. . . but just for the heck of it, I'm gonna try to see if I can do an installment without either a food metaphor or a Harvey Pekar joke. See you then. . . and Notary Sojak! ●



# ANDY MANGELS BACK STAGE

## THE PENGUIN SCANDALS

As I write this column, Thanksgiving has recently passed, the Christmas season is upon us, and another New Year is on its way. As I head into my sixth year of writing for *Amazing Heroes* (first appearance: *AH* #91 March 15, 1986), I'm thankful for several things.

Special thanks to Mike Mettler, Hank Kanalz, and Rob Liefeld (yes, that one!) for help and encouragement in selling my first material to Fantagraphics ("Focus on George Perez", August 1985). Thanks to my many editors—Tom Heintjes, Mark Waid, Chris McCubbin, Kevin Dooley, and of course, Tom Harrington and Kim Thompson—for supporting me in more ways than one, and controlling me when needed. Thanks to my professional "fans," who've now given me other monthly columns in *Fantazia* (Britain), *Wizard* (US), *Marvel Age* (US), and the newest, Marvel's *Edizione Star* (Italy).

Most of all, thanks to the many readers out there who enjoy and support my work. My promise to you for the coming year is to build on what I've done in the past, improving this column for your enjoyment. My wish for Christmas is that people will learn to repect diversity, the true message of nature.

After that, any segue is going to be awkward, so we'll head into the new and a few reviews.

### ABC

*The Human Target* has wrapped production. Premiering in April, the mid-season replacement will run seven shows. The most likely time slot is Monday evenings. Rick Springfield stars as Christopher Chance, DC's man of maskery.

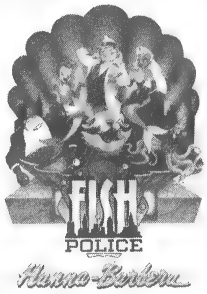
After the success of the long-awaited film, ABC has announced 13 episodes of a new *Addams Family* cartoon for Fall 1992. Animation will be by Hanna-Barbera Studios, which produced an earlier version for NBC from 1973-75. Paramount has begun work on the script for an *Addams Family* sequel as well, which some cast members have expressed doubt over.

Speaking of animation and Hanna-Barbera, the recently-bought-by-Ted-Turner company experienced severe lay-offs in December. H-B head David Kirschner was named president of a new theatrical and film arm of the multi-company Turner Broadcasting System, Hanna Barbera, Inc. One cartoon casualty of the take-over was *Pirates of Darkwater*, a Kirschner creation which won't return this Fall.

George Lucas' *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* will premiere in Feburary, on Monday nights, where Monday Night Football is regularly shown.

### CBS

*Family Dog*, a Tim Burton-Steven Spielberg project, was deemed unusable after ten episodes were delivered. Nelvana is revising the episodes, but it is unknown whether they'll make it in time for mid-season replacement.




*Fish Police*, another Hanna-Barbera project, will appear on CBS this Spring, in April or May. No premiere date had been set for the seven episodes, based on Steve Moncuse's comic series.

### NBC

Yay for weirdness! NBC had renewed the low-rated-but-excellent *Eerie Indiana* (which has no comma in the title, if you hadn't noticed. That's part of the joke.) The show, focusing on the adventures of a young teenager in a very strange town, is one of the best things on TV these days. Six more episodes have been ordered.

NBC has cleared the controversial gay-themed episode of *Quantum Leap* for airing. "Running For Honor" tells the story of a gay youth in a military academy. No airdate has been set.

NBC will have a new one-hour series coming on mid-season. Called *Man & Machine*, the Universal action series produced by Dick Wolf (*Law & Order*) sounds supiciously *Robocop*-esque to me. Wes Craven's much-anticipated *Nightmare Cafe* will also show up as a mid-seasoner, starring Robert Englund

### FOX

*Defenders of Dynatron City*, a George Lucas-inspired super-hero series, is being produced as a half hour animated special in February on Fox. DIC is doing the animation with Lucas-Arts, their first collaboration. Of course, this is a pilot for a possible series.

*Swamp Thing*, the animated version, won't be making any more forays onto the small screen any time soon. DIC executives say there are no murmurs in the green for the show to continue, despite its well-rated five-part series in 1991 and the best-selling toy line.

### Syndication & Cable

That comic that's burning up the newsstands, *Zen, Intergalactic Ninja* will supposedly have a cartoon series (from Surge Licensing and Just Toys) and a toy line this year. I don't know any more details yet, but I'll let you know as I know.

No new news on the in-development

TV series of the *DNAgents*.

*Superboy* is "Out of Luck" on Feb. 22nd, and must help answer the question, "Who is Superboy?" on Feb. 29th. All March episodes will be reruns, including "Know Thine Enemy Pt I & II" (March 7 and 14), "Hell Breaks Loose" (March 21), and "Into the Mystery" (March 28).

*Superforce* takes "The Big Spin" on Feb 22nd, before catching a whiff of "Monkey's Breath" on Feb 29th. As in Superboy's run, the March shows are all re-runs, including "Ghost In The Machine" (March 7), "Made For Each Other Pt. I & II" (March 14 & 21), and "Love Slaves From Outer Space" (March 28).

Don't know whether this is the same guy in the wacky and (in)famous radio series, but Calico Entertainment is developing a *Chicken Man* animated pilot for prime-time viewing.

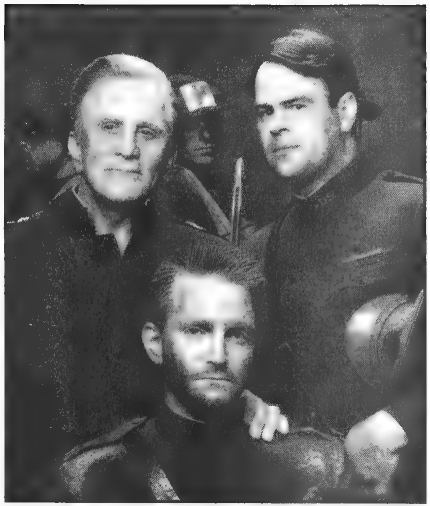
The Sci-Fi Channel is still on the horizons, and may finally see the light late this year. Insiders reveal that the USA Network, a cable staple, will be paying $70 million to take over the fledgling cable network. USA hopes for a 12 million-suscriber base when the net is launched in the Fall.

*Power Pack*, a hopeful series from Paragon Entertainment, has been back-burnered. Though the company is not declaring it "dead," it is definitely "dormant."

HBO's *Tales From the Crypt* has once again garnered a bunch of ACE (Awards for Cable Excellence) nominations. They're up for: Art direction—Greg Melton & Phil Dagort; Best Dramatic Series; Best Drama Actor (3)—John Astin ("Top Billing"), Kirk Douglas ("Yellow"), Beau Bridges ("Abra Kadaver"); Best Directing (2)—Walter Hill ("Deadline), Todd Holland ("Top Billing"), Direction of Photography (2)—Don Burgess ("Yellow"), Tober Draper ("Loved To Death," "The Trap," and "Mournin' Mess"); and Best Makeup—Kevin Yagher. Winners will have been announced by the time you read this, as the awards are given in January. Those will come just in time to cheer up the crew of *Crypt*, and its keeper, as the fourth season goes into production in February for another 12 episodes. A summer of 1992 premiere is on tap.

Forty syndicated episodes of a new animated series called *Stunt Dawgs* will be offered for syndication next Fall form Claster Television. The anthropomorphic series will be based on the exploits of director and stuntman extraordinaire Hal Needham. Claster also syndicates *Bucky O'Hare* and *James Bond, Jr.*, among others.

Cable-station TNT has committed to a new version of *Frankenstein*, which they're saying will be "the most faithful adaptation of the novel ever produced for film." David Wickes will write, produce, and direct the film, which will shot in Europe this Spring.



*Tales From the Crypt* is up for several ACEs, two of which are for "Yellow" (above).

Nickelodeon has renewed their ultra-popular and ultra-weird cartoon series. *Doug* has been renewed for 26 episodes, as has *Rugrats*, while *The Ren & Stimpy Show* got 20 more episodes ordered.

No more news on Lorimar's *Black Lightning* project.

USA Network's *Swamp Thing* should be into its expanded second season (50 episodes!) by the time you read this, every Friday at 10:00 p.m. and Sunday at 6:00 p.m. Dr. Arcane faces "A Jury of his Fears" (Feb. 14) when he's electrocuted and dreams of a court comprised of his past victims. Guest-star David Ackroyd is "Poisonous" (Feb. 21) as Ian James, a television documentary filmmaker who photographs Swampy. Adam Curry (ex-MTV VJ) and Larry Manetti (*Miami Vice*) guest star in "Smoke and Mirrors" (Feb. 28) and Swamp Thing enters "This House of Mayans" (March 6).

### Feature Films

Bilson & DeMeo will not be doing *The Watchmen* after all, citing their busy schedule at Disney. They were to finish the script for Largo Entertainment by Christmas, but dropped out. No replacement has been set. Another comic book project (besides TV's *Human Target*) is in the "no comment" stage.

*Elektra: Assassin* is in development at Tri-Star, with none other than creator Frank Miller set to script and possibly direct! Miller's treatment was recently approved, according to Stan Lee, and he's beginning work on the script now. The previous script (reviewed in *AH* #179) by L.M. Kit Carson and Jim McBride, has been tossed.

*Wild Cards*, in development as a Disney/Hollywood film, is currently being written by series co-writers George R.R. Martin and Melinda Snodgrass. Executive Producer is Dr. Michael Engelberg (who's also doing the same for Burrough's *Princess of Mars* and Heinlein's *Puppet Masters*), the project has a two-year option. Martin and Snodgrass are currently working on the treatment, deciding what to put in and what to take out. "We're trying hard to be faithful to the spirit of the books" says Martin, "and put as many of the favorite characters in as possible. The origin sequence may be contained in flashbacks, but the story probably won't start in the 1940's." Martin stresses that the film, if made, will be live action.

In other *Wild Cards* news (I know it's not film or TV news, but I got the information Martin filled me in on news for fans of the the series): *Wild Cards 10: Double Solitaire*, a Dr. Tachyon solo book by Melinda Snodgrass, will ship in April. *Wild Cards 11: Dealer's Choice*, a mosaic novel, will ship December 1992. *Wild Cards 12* will be a Captain Trips solo book by Victor Milan. The series will then switch from Bantam to Baen Books for the next three novels, all mosaics. Epic Comics will also be doing another original mini-series this summer or fall, as well as four original solo stories in the new Epic anthology, creatively entitled *Epic*.

With Alexander and Ilya Salkind's *Christopher Columbus* out in October 1992, *Superman: The New Movie* will not be rushed for Christmas; it will be out in 1993.

Meanwhile, *Superman* rumors about one of Hollywood's super-men are untrue. Arnold Schwarzenegger was rumored to have offered to lend his muscle to the film for a mere $20 million cash and "most, if not all American revenues for one year." Arnold's agent, Lou Pitt says that the Terminator won't take part in any Salkind production at any price.

A three-page ad in *Daily Variety* and the *Hollywood Reporter* announced the *Fantastic Four* and *Silver Surfer* films as major motion pictures with Stan Lee executive producing. However, close reading of the ad reveals that the company behind it, headed by Bernd Eichinger (*Last Exit to Brooklyn, Neverending Story*), is only shopping the rights around to the studios. This means that the films will not even be a possibility unless a film company buys the rights. Apparently, Disney had recently passed on the *Fantastic Four*. Stan says that Eichinger has the rights to the FF, the Surfer, Doctor Doom, and Galactus.

In a similar vein, *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs* is in development with Galaxy Films. However, Galaxy is not a film company. They have acquired the rights to sell to the studios. The script is being written, and then they have to shop the project around.

Mark Evanier tells me he has a *Comic Buyer's Guide* clipping about a *Black Widow* movie from the early '80s. It apparently had photos of Bianca Jagger as the Widow. Obviously, the project never went anywhere, but I'd be interested in seeing any information (or a copy of said article) if anyone has it.

Another Marvel hero, *Iron Man*, is in "development Hell" at Universal, according to a spokesperson for Stuart Gordon, the producer. The film hasn't been talked about in months, the writer is no longer attached (they weren't happy with his story treatment), and the project may go to turnaround soon.

Disney is surging ahead on two new animated features, given the success of *Beauty & The Beast* and the sales of *Fantasia*. *Aladdin*, due out in 1992, will be the final film to feature the music of Howard Ashman, who died of AIDS in 1991. Ashman had co-scored *The Little Mermaid* and Beauty & The Beast. Meanwhile, *King of the Jungle*, a coming-of-age story about a young lion, is currently being penned by writer Linda Woolverton. It will be Disney's 1993 cartoon release.

*Black Panther* is currently at Columbia, where a treatment was just given a green light, and black screenwriter Charles Hollander is now scripting. Hollander also wrote the screenplay adapting the Marvel Graphic Novel *Superboxers*, for Disney's Hollywood pictures. It's unknown whether or not this project is still active.

Rumors of Bill Bixby's involvement in a new *Hulk* movie have come again, this time from a New York interview with him. Bixby is also reportedly trying to revive his old *Magician* series.

*Hellraiser III: Hell on Earth*, is due out early this year. The story focuses on Pinhead (Doug Bradley).

Bad news on James Cameron's *Spider-Man* project for Carolco. That company, though flush with sucess after *Terminator 2*, is deeply in the hole and may collapse soon. Rumors that Cinergi will take over the company and its projects are zooming through Hollywood. Cameron's not waiting around. He's hard at work on his next project, writing and directing *Crowded Room*. This film will adapt Daniel Keyes' book, *The Minds of Billy Milligan*, about a man with 24 different personalities. The film will start shooting mid-92, delaying *Spider-Man* until 1993 at least.

Steven Spielberg is producing an animated version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's long-running Broadway hit, *Cats*. He's also picked up the rights to *Casper the Friendly Ghost*. Spielberg that is, not Webber. As if that wasn't enough, St. Steven is connected to Tri-Star's live action *Zorro*, a new live action *Dennis the Menace*, and the sequel to *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* The second toon story will be by Nat Maudlin and directed by Disney alumnus Rob Minkoff.

*Daredevil* is no longer with Shelley Duvall's Think Entertainment as a TV series anymore, although she's still interested in producing it. Two movie companies are now talking about the film rights.

*Robocop 3* will be released in June or August from the revitalized Orion Pictures. Another Orion film, *Stephen King's The Dark Half*, will be released in the Fall. Timothy Hutton stars as both the writer and his Jekyll-like creation.

*Dr. Strange, Ghost Rider, Nick Fury*, and *Sgt. Fury* are all projects currently in option negotiation. Whether or not they'll be optioned is not yet known.

The long-planned *Sub-Mariner* film is totally dead. However, one dead Marvel project, *Blade*, (based on the *Tomb of Dracula* character), has been revived by two new scripters who are peddling the screenplay around Hollywood, hoping to drum up interest.

No news on *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III*, due to start filming next year for a Christmas 1992 release, but *Turtles* co-creator Kevin Eastman has signed a very lucrative contract with Limelight productions. He will develop movie and TV projects there for the next five years. He brings with him ten TV and two theatrical projects he's developed at Tundra Publishing. One can be reasonably certain none of them are *Bratpack* or *Taboo*.

With Carolco facing money problems, the future of the *X-Men* film is also in doubt. Stan Lee says other studios are interested in the project, which he thinks would not remain dormant for long if Carolco does fold. Check out a review of the first draft next issue.

Ex-Vicki Vale and wanna-be Catwoman actress Sean Young recently said about *Dick Tracy* star Warren

Spidey's movie is postponed until mid-1993.

Beatty: "He fired me from that movie because, basically, whenever we were both onscreen you looked at me and not him—well it comes back later. He became a fool wearing a yellow shawl . . .He was a weenie. A real little weenie."

*Aliens III* has been pushed back all the way to May 22, even though the extensive reshoots to strengthen the picture were cancelled. Sometime soon, I'll review the script and the two rejected versions.

### Batman Returns

The tabloids have provided a wealth of gossip about *Batman Returns*, and like most of what you read in them, it's garbage.

The *Enquirer* said that Michelle Pfeiffer had to have her butt padded for Catwoman's costume. A spokesman for the film said, "Bulls**t." Pfeiffer's tush, it seems, is admirable without padding.

The *Star* said that Danny DeVito slipped on the ice during a cold weather scene and injured his wrist badly. The Warner spokesman said, "Bulls**t." He had a "no comment" for the revelation that there are hundreds of real penguins used as extras on the film.

The *Star* also reported that Pfeiffer wasn't getting along with star Michael Keaton, as the two had been romantically involved. She had reportedly dumped him for *Dangerous Liasons* co-star John Malkovich. This too was labelled false.

The *Star* was the first to get itself in big trouble when, in their November 26 issue, they published a full length picture of Pfeiffer in her Catwoman costume. The picture was a test shot of the costume, and was stolen. Warner Brothers is suing the *Star* and prosecuting the thief. The costume is, as I revealed months ago, a black rubber bodysuit made by Heretic rubberwear in Los Angeles. It has six-inch heels on platform shoes. (No, they're coming back!)

*The Globe* wasn't light on the uptake either. They published a story about the "extraordinary" measures DeVito is taking to go from dressing room to the set, including sheets, boxes, and a masked-off golf cart dubbed "The Penguinmobile." When I was on the Warner lot, this was confirmed. Producers aren't taking a chance that DeVito or Pfeiffer's costumes or makeup are going to get out. The Warner spokesman had "no comment" on *The Globe*'s revelations that the Penguin has a steamy seduction scene with Catwoman, and, that after she double-crosses Pengy, she beds the Caped Crusader himself at the film's end!

But the biggest news by far came in *The National Enquirer*'s December 10 issue. On page three, full-face photos of DeVito, Pfeiffer, and Christopher Walken (as the Penguin's friend, Max Schreck, named after the star of the 1922 vampire film, *Nosferatu*) in makeup are presented. Again, Warner is instituting legal proceedings against the *Enquirer* for the stolen photos. Warner has threatened any magazine which reproduces these or the *Globe* photos with a lawsuit as well (which is why you won't see any *photos* in *AH*).

Left: Danny DeVito.
Below: In Penguin make-up and costume.

The *Enquirer* story reveals that the Penguin has webbed fingers and claws, and that he has a fight to the death with Batman at the film's end. Once again, Warner had "no comment" about this.

From insider reports, the budget for *Batman Returns* has started at $75 million and is going up from there, leading many to believe it will top *Terminator 2* in terms of high costs. (And compare it to *Hook*'s debated $55 million.) Pfeiffer is getting "only" $3 million of that money to play the seductive Catwoman.

Co-star Vincent Schiavelli (*Ghost*) plays a character identified as "organ grinder." Warner wouldn't say if this was the character's name or his occupation.

### Video Releases

*Captain America* will finally be released in America, on video from RCA/Columbia. A very late Spring or early Summer release is planned. And you thought it was all just a bad dream. A spokesman says he expects the title to be rental-priced (i.e. $90-plus).

Best Film and Video's *Marvel Videos* weren't without some glitches. "We 'oopsed' big-time," says President Ben Tenn. A small quantity of four videos were duplicated, shipped, and sold, with only one episode per video. The *Marvel Super-Heroes* cartoons—*Captain America*, *Sub-Mariner*, *Iron Man*, and *Thor* should have had two adventures apiece on them, and some didn't. If you got one of the defective videos, Best will replace them for free. Send the cassette back with a note of explanation and your address, and they'll ship a new, correct version out promptly. Write to: BEST FILM & VIDEO, 98 Cutter Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11021.

Best has announced their next set of releases, due March 1. These are in addition to the 13 tapes currently out. The six include:

—*Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends* "A Firestar is Born" (guest-starring the X-Men!)
—*Spider-Man* "Curiosity Killed the Spider-Man"
—*Captain America* "Revenge of Captain America" and "Sentinel & Spy"
—*Sub-Mariner* "Planet of Doom" and "Start of the Quest"
—*Hulk* "The Incredible Shrinking Hulk"
—*Fantastic Four* "Meet Dr. Doom"

*The Rocketeer* will be released on video and laserdisk February 5th, at $94.95. At those prices, the title will be rental-only, a move designed to net Disney more money in the short run on an expensive film that dive-bombed into the tarmac.

### Magazines

For those interested parties, the January (Vol. 5, #1) issue of *Celebrity Sleuths*, a magazine dedicated to finding famous (and not-so famous) female stars in the nude, is "Women of Fantasy 3." Featured nude are such comic characters as Stacy Haiduk (*Superboy*) in scenes from the unreleased *Luther the Geek*, Helen Slater (*Supergirl*), Jennifer Connelly (*Rocketeer*), Ornella Muti (*Flash Gordon*), Madonna (*Dick Tracy*), Irish McCalla (*Sheena* of the '50s), Tanya Roberts (*Sheena* of the '80s), and Nancy Allen (*Robocop*).

### Obituaries

Anton Furst, 47 died November 24th in Los Angeles. The special effects man, best known for his Oscar-winning work on *Batman*, was soon to begin work on *MidKnight*, the super-hero fantasy movie starring Michael Jackson. Furst jumped to his death from an eight-story parking garage.

Howard Brunner, 51, died November 12th, of AIDS. He had guest-starred in episodes of *The Incredible Hulk*.

### Brief Film Reviews

Paramount/Orion's *The Addams Family* is a rather amusing two-hour diversion. If you haven't seen it by now, it's worth the ticket price, though a matinee or cheap night show might satisfy you more.

The principals of the cast, Raul Julia as Gomez and Angelica Huston as Morticia, were as slick as could be, gliding through their parts effortlessly. Christina Ricci's Wednesday was a scene stealer throughout the film, though more should have been seen of Pugsley and Lurch (both seemed almost unnecessary to the story). Christopher Lloyd's Uncle Fester was well-played, but lacked the charm of the other actors.

The film seemed much to episodic, the camera-work and the script not lingering on any scene longer than 30 seconds. After the first half-hour, the brief scenes became some what annoying. Though the script and humor were often very black indeed (many were taken directly from Charles Addams cartoons), my husband and I kept thinking that the Addamses didn't seem that weird to us. Perhaps living on the fringes of society ourselves, we think less of "convention" or "normalcy" and more of diversity. Despite its shortcomings, *The Addams Family* entertained, and I look forward to a sequel.

Steven Spielberg's *Hook* deviated only peripherally from the script I reviewed last issue, and as such, the story did not thrill me. Though every bit of the budget ended up on screen, Neverland was too wild and overblown. This was not every child's dream, but every designer's worst nightmare. Spielberg's crane shots in the pirate village and during the climax fights were too full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. The Lost Boys' treehouse community looked like an ivy-covered Magic Mountain replete with roller-coaster tracks and skate board ramps. I was surprised I didn't see any Tilt-A-Whirls.

Robin Williams was brilliant in the Peter Banning/Pan role, easily matching Chris Reeve's early Clark Kent/Superman personality changes for credibility. Dustin Hoffman's Hook was only slightly less brilliant, as was Bob Hoskins' Smee. Julia Roberts' Tinkerbell was a disappointment; she had too little of the verve of the book's fairy (Plus, I can't believe people find her beautiful. Her pouty lips look like they were caught in a curling iron!). Her special effect secenes were equally mediocre, as were most of Peter's flying scenes. I've seen just as good flying effects on *Superboy* every week.

If you haven't seen *Hook*, don't pay full price for the experience. Go to a cheap showing, or catch it on video. This "tribute" to Sir James Barrie's legacy was largely disappointing.

### BACKSTAGE TO THE FUTURE

Next Month, we'll fill you in on the latest news, plus I'll review the scripts for *X-Men/Wolverine* and *Batman 2* (before it became *Batman Returns*)! I know that'll bring you back! And wait until you see what's coming up in our special 200th issue! We'll see you next month . . .Backstage!

●

# A FEW WORDS with SETH

by JEFFREY LANG

Two issues of Seth's *Palooka-ville*, published by Drawn & Quarterly, have been published and have been hailed by no less a light than Chester "*Yummy Fur*" Brown as the Next Big Thing. Since Chester seems to know what he's talking about (he picked out Julie Doucet's *Dirty Plotte*, also published by D&Q, as last year's Harvey Award winner), I tracked down Seth in a hotel bar during a rare New York visit. Thanks to Joe Matt for helping to arrange things and to CB for the use of the tape recorder when mine croaked.

**LANG:** *Before* Palooka ville *and the pieces in* Drawn & Quarterly, *you did issues 6 through 13 of* Mr. X. *That was your first work in comics and you said earlier that you didn't want to place too much emphasis on those stories. Why is that?*

**SETH:** I was hoping if I didn't bring it up, no one else would. When I first started working on *Palooka-ville*, I thought no one would even remember my work on *Mr. X*. I thought, three or four years have gone by—everyone will have forgotten. It seemed to me that no one was reading the book. I *never* got a letter that referred to me so I figured "Nobody is really paying attention to this. When I come back, it'll be like I'm a new artist. No one will know who I am." But I was wrong. People remember.

**LANG:** *How would you describe what you're doing in* Palooka-ville?

**SETH:** My main goal is to try to be subtle. Comics don't have a lot of subtlety to them most of the time. That might sound quite strange if you've only read the first issue because that one is quite violent.

**LANG:** *There's violence* in *it. I don't know if I'd say it's "violent."*

**SETH:** Yeah, it's not really violent—I know what you mean. It's not like *Gore Shriek* or something [*laughter*]. I don't feel like I've necessarily achieved it yet, but I'd like *Palookaville* to have a certain subtlety that's missing from most comics. I'd like it to be very quiet as opposed to the way most comics are—very direct, very aggressive in their narrative style. I'd like to tell stories where I don't have to worry so much about plot and that's why I turn to my own life. I find my own life very interesting, even the littlest thing. I may have picked a pretty structured story for the first issue, but sometimes it can be the simplest thing that I think will make a fabulous story, something about some incident that happens to you when you go out to the corner store. This kind of subtlety is something I think most comic readers are pretty bored with.

**LANG:** *What do you mean by bored?*

**SETH:** Not interested in to begin with. I think it's because of the tradition of comics as fantasy, and I think that's why a lot of artists are turning towards autobiography. It's a reaction to fantasy—it's the most real thing to them, their own life.

**LANG:** *In the epilogue to the first issue, you say that the incident (Seth being beat up by a gang of toughs in a subway) had lost a certain amount of reality because of having told it so many times over the years. In the process of filtering through your experiences to decide what you want to write about, isn't there the danger that everything you do loses a little bit of reality?*

**SETH:** Well, it does, and it especially loses reality once you make a comic book story out of it. I've found that before I did the story, my memories of that incident were pretty much photographic type memories, but now I find that I remember it like the comic, in the sequence of events I portrayed it in. This process really brings a memory down to a set way after you've made it into a comic. It loses a touch of the reality of real memory. I felt that I had to put that line in the epilogue to make the reader know that this is not necessarily an absolute truth, the way the story has been represented, that it's been told *many* times. Some details have been swept away, others have become concrete and I'm not necessarily sure that this was exactly how it happened.

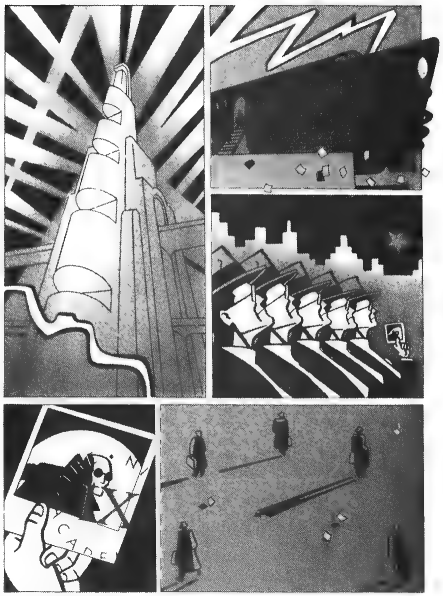
**LANG:** *Do you find yourself, on a daily basis, selecting through what happened that day and saying, "Was there anything here that I can turn into a story" or does it take some time?*

**SETH:** Actually, it does sort of work like that, in that I've been keeping a sporadic diary and I find as I'm writing out the events, it often seems that every day there's a possible story. I think that the details of regular life are so interesting, and so little about them is done in comics that I can see that the tendency I have to try to quash now is to ramble on and on in stories.

All the tiny details tend to get lost in a comic story. Say you want to go into the kitchen to make yourself a cup of coffee—I could see myself wanting to do all the panels of things like pouring the water, putting the filter in, because when you're doing a story, that wealth of detail seems to really add an atmosphere to things. It's so powerful when I see it drawn down in comics work. Chester [Brown] is certainly influencing me on this. His use of silent panels adds a certain depth to the story. It's that wealth of detail that fascinates me.

**LANG:** *Why do you use silent panels? What's their purpose?*

**SETH:** Sometimes, in between events, in between pieces of dialogue, a silent panel will add that moment, like a comedian when he takes a pause. Their purpose is that they give the reader time to think.



Above: A view of Radiant City from *Mr. X*.
Below: Cafe Calculus, where cultural icons meet.

HOLIDAY
A DAY SPENT WITH LE CORBUSIER, SETH (THAT'S ME) AND MADONNA.
WE MET AT THE CAFE' CALCULUS LE CORBU WAS EARLY.
CAFE CALCULUS
THE HOUSE IS A MACHINE FOR LIVING IN.
E=MC²
DON'T WORRY YOU'LL LIKE HER!
MADONNA, THIS IS LE CORBUSIER MR PURISM MEET MADONNA
A TOWN IS A TOOL
PLEASED TO MEETCHA.

Well, you could go out...

**LANG:** *Where did you get the title* Palooka-ville? *What does it mean?*
**SETH:** I searched around for a title for a while. I wanted something with an anachronistic quality because so much of my life is wrapped up in my interest in the early part of this century. I guess I've always been a little fanatical about it—collecting all kinds of stuff, immersed in it. I wanted something that felt like slang from that period, something that had some resonance, when it hit me—the phrase "a one-way ticket to Palooka-ville." I thought it was a nice, open word. I thought it would be nice to have it be a bit negative. It's open-ended—you can really do anything under a title like *Palooka-ville*—but it also lends itself to that sort of downplaying of yourself.
**LANG:** *When I realized that you were the person who had been doing* Mr. X, *my first thought was that the title was a cut on Somnopolis.*
**SETH:** [*laughs*]: Definitely not, but it is funny because my attitude has shifted. When I was working on *Mr. X*, I was interested only in the backgrounds and now on *Palooka-ville*, I hate doing any backgrounds. I'm interested in the human figure now, which is funny because it's a complete turnaround.
**LANG:** *I thought the backgrounds in the first issue were pretty complete.*
**SETH:** Well, I put them in because I feel it's necessary, but I hate the work in doing them. I'd much rather just have people standing against a blank wall if I could get away with it.
**LANG:** *So, issue #1 is about you getting beat up on the train. I haven't read #2 yet, so why don't you tell me about it?*
**SETH:** Did you read the story I had in *Draw & Quarterly* called "Jefferson? The one about the restaurant?
**LANG:** *Yeah, I loved it.*
**SETH:** Well, issue #2 goes back to that restaurant. I'm 18 years old and it's about the dynamics of the people who work there. I don't really focus on myself as the central character. I'm in all the scenes because it's from my point of view, but I'm not doing all the talking and I'm not trying to instruct the reader too much in what to think. This is going to be the first part of a two-part. Part one leads up to a pivotal event which the second part completely revolves around.
**LANG:** *And after that?*
**SETH:** In the fourth issue, I come to an incident that happened about a year ago. Well, it's not really even an incident. The fourth issue is about me thinking about some small events that happened around last New Year's. They're *very* small events, not even worth mentioning. It's how I relate to them more than what the events were. They're not intrinsically interesting in that they're just things like someone I met in the street, a night I went and played 78 RPM records at a nightclub, and getting together with some friends. It's a real introspective piece. The first three issues were back in the past and I want to establish who I am now.
**LANG:** *I thought that part of the reason the first issue worked so well was because you begin and end it with you in the present talking about yourself. In fact, all through the first issue, you're undercutting yourself, playing with who you were and what you were doing. Are you planning on continuing with that approach?*
**SETH:** The next one does use a different approach, but I'm not completely abandoning that technique. My life feels to me like it's segmented up into different indentities in a way. I don't know if you feel like this, but every few years I feel like I've redefined myself. It's like, "I can't believe I was thinking *that* a few years ago." In the '80s, I was involved in the nightclub scene and my physical appearance would change dramatically every couple of years—the color of my hair, the kind of clothes I was wearing—they almost seemed to be like individual phases. It's really easy for me to break my life down into "That's who I was then," "This is who I am now." Because of that, I can't help but look back and laugh at some of those phases and think, "What a jerk I was then" or "I can't believe I went along with that crowd."
**LANG:** *Underneath all that, are you always observing yourself?*
**SETH:** Yeah, constantly. I really do feel a strong schism that way. Part of it is this name change. I have a different name now than when I was younger. I'm Seth now. Back then, I was Gregory. That's really a whole part of it, too, because back then, I wasn't a happy teenager. A big part of the experience of coming to Toronto was the anonymity of it all. It was marvelous—nobody knew who I was and I really think that pushed me towards this idea that nobody needed to know anything about me and I could be whoever I want. I really had a hard time relating to my pre-Toronto memories. It didn't seem like it had happened to me—like it was another person's memory.

Just in the last few years, I've started to re-invest emotional attachment to my teen years. There was nothing really wrong with it—I don't have to look back on them negatively and I'm not distancing myself from them anymore. It really has set up that way of thinking for me, although to a big degree, that's over now. I've been pretty much the way I am for five or six years.
**LANG:** *You said earlier that you feel your art style was influenced by illustrators from the early '30s. Anyone in particular?*
**SETH:** Mostly the *New Yorker* cartoonists, people like Thurber, Charles Addams, Sid Hoff, and Peter Arno. For me, my art follows a really simple line of influences. I was always really attracted to really cartoony artists. Talking to people like Chester and Joe [Matt], when we talk about the comics we read when we were kids, they always say that they really liked Bernie Wrightson or Neal Adams and I always *hated* that stuff. It never appealed to me. I always liked Jack Kirby because he was cartoony. I was drawn to the cartoony stuff much more than to anything that had a pseudo-realistic style to it.

Cover rough to *Palooka-ville* #3.

**By SETH**
*Mr. X* #6-13 (Vortex Comics)
*Vortex* (Vortex Comics)
*Drawn & Quarterly* #4-7 (Drawn & Quarterly Publications)
*True North* #1-2 (Comic Legends Legal Defense Fund)
*Palooka-ville* #1, 2 (Drawn & Quarterly)

...and get beaten up by thugs in *Palooka-ville* #1.

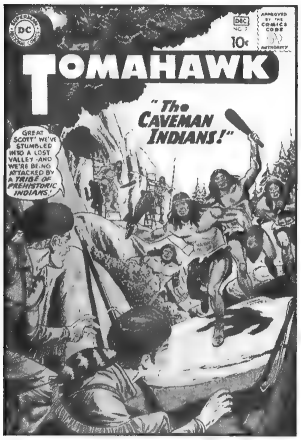
From *Palooka-ville* #2: Seth gets involved with his boss' wife, Beaches.

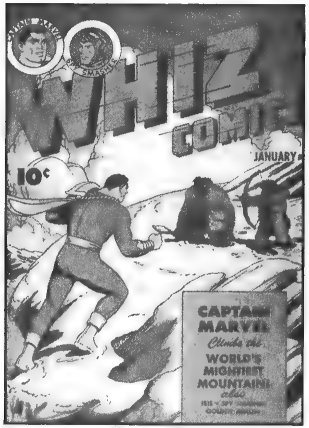
So... where is he?
Tom just took him to the hospital... It's not too bad--but we did, uhh, have to kinda unscrew his thumb from the...
CUT IT OUT-- I don't wanna hear about it!
I just heard John's been cut!
Oh, hi Beaches.
Hello Ma'am
Is he okay?
JACK'S WIFE
17

# Don Rosa's COVER GALLERY

ACTION COMICS
ZOOMS BACK TO THIS STONE AGE TO FACE...
"THE CHALLENGE OF STONEMAN!"
ME--STONEMAN! I'VE GOT SUPER-POWERS AND I'M TAKING OVER HERE, SEE?
HMM...IS ME IN FOR A SURPRISE!

Detective COMICS
BATMAN and ROBIN SOLVE... The MYSTERY OF THE MAN-BEAST!
GREAT SCOTT! THE REFRIGERATION COILS STOPPED WORKING--AND THAT CAVEMAN CREATURE IS COMING OUT OF ITS SUSPENDED ANIMATION!

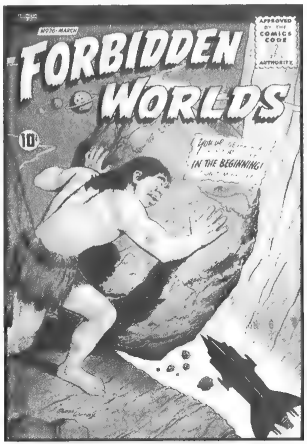

TOMAHAWK
"The CAVEMAN INDIANS!"
GREAT SCOTT! WE'VE STUMBLED INTO A LOST VALLEY--AND WE'RE ATTACKED BY A TRIBE OF PREHISTORIC INDIANS!



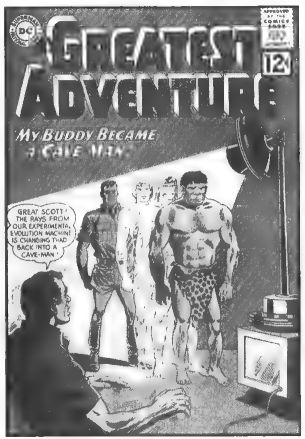



Today we have a cover gallery featuring CAVEMEN simply because I know you'll wonder why

*Action* #201 shows Superman visiting the Stone Age; this was one of the stories adapted from the TV series of the time (*The Adventures of Superman*, not *Playhouse 90*). In *Detective* #285 a Caveman gets loose and soon bops Batman with a giant stone ax he gets off the roof of the Acme Stone Ax factory! Tomahawk fought invisible Indians, flame Indians, giant Indians. . . you'd think he'd scarcely raise an eyebrow at the caveman Indians in *Tomahawk* #71. *Whiz* #70 has the World's Mightiest Mortal meet cave guys on the World's Mightiest Mountain. ACG always had provocative cover scenes, as here on *Forbidden Worlds* #76. The museum guard on *Astonishing* #36 needs to run over behind that "don't touch" sign real quick! And the author of *My Greatest Adventure* #68 does us funnybook writers proud—first with that compelling title ("My Buddy Became a Caveman"), and then with his grammer ("the rays is changing Thad!") Finally, that fat little nothing Popnecker kid concludes the gallery with *Herbie* #6



Astonishing
HA! HA! DON'T LOOK SO WORRIED, MISTER! AS LONG AS THIS THING'S ON ICE HE'S AS HARMLESS AS A KITTEN!
PITHECANTHROPE GIANT
DON'T TOUCH


GREATEST ADVENTURE
MY BUDDY BECAME A CAVE MAN
GREAT SCOTT! THE RAYS FROM OUR EXPERIMENTAL EVOLUTION MACHINE IS CHANGING THAD BACK INTO A CAVE-MAN!

Single Copies $5 Post Paid

COMICS EXPRESS BACK ISSUES

Any 5 For $15 Post Paid

ORDER FROM
FICTIONEER BOOKS, LTD.
234 FIFTH AVE. • SUITE 301
NEW YORK, NY 10001

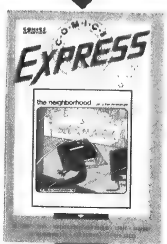
1

2

3

4

5

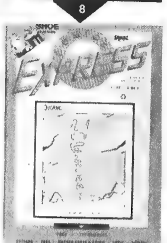

6

7

8

9

10


12

13

14

15

16

COMICS INTERVIEW PUBLICATION

# COMICS EXPRESS

"Very funny and well worth the price."—*Amazing Heroes*

**THE COLLECTOR'S ONLY SOURCE FOR THE ALL-NEW POGO!**

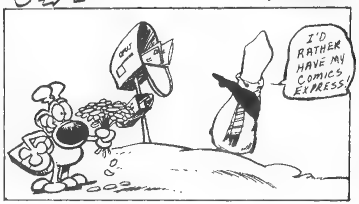
The magazine with the funniest strips in America – that's COMICS EXPRESS

You'll go BIZARRO when the NEW BREED move into THE NEIGHBORHOOD

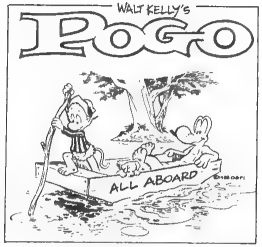
• • • PLUS • • •

• POGO! •
• OUTLAND •
• ERNIE • SHOE •
• MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM •

COMICS EXPRESS stays *ABSOLUTELY UP-TO-DATE* so you never have to wait more than a month to find your favorite funny strips in a collectible format!



BIZARRO
By DAN PIRARO
GREG ACCIDENTALLY WOUNDED HAN OUT OF SEASON, SO WE'RE PUTTING HAN UP TILL HE GETS BACK ON HIS FEET TO AVOID LITIGATION



ORDER FROM
FICTIONEER BOOKS, LTD.
234 FIFTH AVE. • SUITE 301
NEW YORK, NY 10001

☐ Single copy(s) of COMICS EXPRESS #_____ at $5
☐ Multiple copies at $15 for 5 issues of COMICS EXPRESS #s._____
☐ Subscription starting with COMICS EXPRESS #_____
Subscriptions: $36 for 12 issues in U.S.A. ($51 Overseas & Canada).

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP ____

# REviews

## MAUS II

**Written & illustrated by ART SPIEGELMAN; Published by PANTHEON BOOKS.**

Forget your *American Flaggs*. Forget your *Dark Knights* and your *Watchmen*. I assert that comics has produced only one true work of literature—and *Maus* is it.

I have nothing against the three aforementioned series. I read them all and enjoyed the dickens out of them—each is a wonderful example of comics with an adult sensibility, but each is ultimately limited by the traditional comic book conventions: gaudy costumes, conflicts of almost mythic proportions, and a pervasive feeling of people and events that are larger than life. For comics creators to prove they can produce work of true literary merit, they have to put aside the medium's familiar trappings and tell "little" stories, tales with a tight focus that deal with the subtle interplay of idea and emotion among mundane characters, and they must tell them with a skill that will compare favorably to a Joyce Carol Oates, a John Cheever, or a Raymond Chandler.

What comics artists and writers working today are up to that challenge? Will Eisner had come close, bless him, with *The Dreamer* and *To The Heart of the Storm*, but only Art Spiegelman has hit the bullseye.

And he hit it again with *Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began*, the conclusion of the two stories so skillfully interwoven in the first *Maus* volume. *Maus II* chronicles the atrocities of the Holocaust from a survivor's view within the Nazi concentration camps of Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Dachau, interwoven with the modern-day tale of an emotionally complex relationship of the type that can only exist between a father and a son. The connection between these two narratives is that the survivor from the first story—a resourceful, admirable character—is also the miserly, flint-hearted father of the second. His name is Vladek Spiegelman. Art Spiegelman is his son, an artist who has found the best way to tell these intense and personal stories is through comics (he makes all his Jewish characters mice, all his Germans cats, all his Poles pigs, all his Americans dogs, and so on). By using anthropomorphism, Spiegelman makes palatable both the harsh reality of the death camps and the tempestuous relationship between his father and himself.

Vladek died of congestive heart failure on August 18, 1982...
Françoise and I stayed with him in the Catskills back in August 1979.
Vladek started working as a tinman in Auschwitz in the spring of 1944...
I started working on this page at the very end of February 1987
In May 1987 Françoise and I are expecting a baby...
Between May 16, 1944 and May 24, 1944 over 100,000 Hungarian Jews were gassed in Auschwitz...
In September 1986, after 8 years of work, the first part of MAUS was published. It was a critical and commercial success.
At least fifteen foreign editions are coming out. I've gotten 4 serious offers to turn my book into a T.V. special or movie. (I don't wanna.)
In May 1968 my mother killed herself. (She left no note.)
Lately I've been feeling depressed.
Alright Mr. Spiegelman. We're ready to shoot!...

*MAUS II* is cracking the *New York Times* best-seller list.

Unlike the first *Maus*, which ended on an horrific note with Vladek at the gates of Auschwitz, *Maus II* winds down in a herky-jerky fashion—time after time Vladek and his fellow newly-released prisoners run afoul of Nazi patrols who menace them, even though the war is over—and I feared the ultimate conclusion to the *Maus* saga was going to disappoint.

The thought should have never crossed my mind. The final page of *Maus II* is an emotional roller-coaster, ending one story on an uplifting note and the other in the most painful, heart-wrenching manner imaginable.

*Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began*: there is no justice in the world if this book doesn't win the Harvey and Eisner awards for Best Graphic Album this year.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ***—Bruce Canwell***

## ROBIN II: THE JOKER'S WILD! #1

**Written by CHUCK DIXON; pencilled by TOM LYLE; inked by BOB SMITH; edited by DENNIS O'NEIL. Published by DC COMICS.**

The first line of the first issue emanates from Arkham Asylum: "This is madness!" How appropriate. Enough ink has been spilled over the obscene way covers and holograms are being marketed with this mini-series. For the record, I bought the $1.00 newsstand version of this turkey.

I am here to report that the emperor has no clothes. Those masters of mediocrity, Dixon and Lyle, serve up another tired recycled story behind all the bells and whistles of the cover ploy. The Joker escapes from Arkham (again) in an entirely unconvincing way. He kidnaps a computer expert so that he can "turn this town into a circus" through everybody's computer somehow. Batman is out of town. Robin is all a-scared of the Joker and lets the clown prince slip through his fingers. At the end, Robin grinds his teeth over his failure. Does any of this sound particularly original? I thought not.

DC still hasn't quite figured out who this new Robin kid is, either. He was first presented as a "golly-gee, gosh-wow" kind of nice kid, but it quickly became obvious that that wouldn't play in Gloom City. So now Tim Drake is this strange mix: a straight arrow genius with a punkish haircut, a newly pasted-on grimace, and an inability to fit in with the cool kids or the geeks at school. This ambiguous character could be the stuff of interesting character development, but so far our new Boy Wonder is still a cipher (and he's been around for a couple of years already!).

The insides of the super-duper-famous-artist-hologram-in-the-different-covers-polybagged-sure-thing-collectors'-item marketing nightmare are empty. If you must, please buy just *one* copy of the modest newsprint newsstand edition. Are we into collecting comic books or gene-spliced covers these days?

***GRADE:*** ★ ***—TK Dean***

## DAREDEVIL #300

**Written by D.G. CHICHESTER; pencilled by LEE WEEKS; inked by AL WILLIAMSON; edited by RALPH MACCHIO. Published by MARVEL COMICS.**

If you've been following Daredevil for the last few months, you know he's been quietly engineering the final defeat and humiliation of his arch-enemy, Wilson Fisk, aka The Kingpin. He's applied the terrorist group Hydra here, Fisk's feeling for his estranged wife there. Quiet as a churchmouse, he has set in motion a process which appropriately culminates in the three-hundredth issue.

Chichester, Weeks, and Williamson work well together as they provide a sequel to Frank Miller's memorable "Born Again" series. Their conclusion to the four-part "Last Rites" saga is riveting in places. We see the Kingpin wobbling like a bowling pin in the wake of rolling justice. We watch the big man sweat before a grand jury. He clings to a shred of hope—falsified evidence against Matt Murdock. (Here, Chichester has done a good job of weaving a tiny, seamless detail into Miller's original story.) But Fisk's fall is preordained. Writer and artists handle his disintegration well.

Yet, the book has its flaws. Chichester is better with dialogue than exposition. Are we supposed to believe, for example, that while fighting with Kingpin, Daredevil is thinking about ". . .a black and white view of a thug operating under the auspices of a modern day feudal lord. . ."? That's one of the problems with comics today—too much talk, even when lips aren't moving.

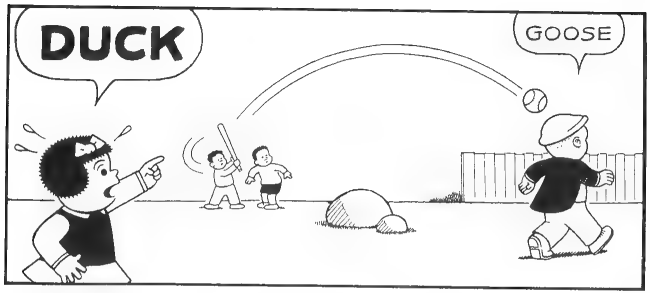
A more serious fault, however, is Chichester's conclusion. After Matt Murdock has completely demoralized his enemy, just when you think that even more poetic justice will be dealt out, suddenly, the Kingpin is "born again" (and I *don't* mean by faith in Jesus Christ) in a horrific act of violence. He lumbers off, presumably to return and bedevil Daredevil again, and it just doesn't feel right—like the last note of a finely played piece of music going *plunk* instead of *plink*.

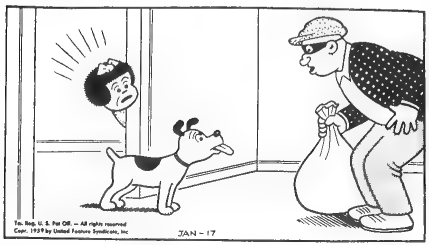
If Chichester and Co. had taken off the gloves and shown us just how far the mighty can fall instead of giving us a rather tiresome soliloquy at the end, I'd give *Daredevil* #300 four stars. But, as it is, the issue gets. . .

***GRADE:*** ★ ★ ★ ***Gary D. Robinson***

## NANCY'S PETS

*Robin II: The Joker's Wild* #1 isn't cracking the *New York Times* best-seller list.



Nancy! Nancy! Nancy! Nancy!

**Written and illustrated by ERNIE BUSHMILLER; edited by JAMES KITCHEN. Published by KITCHEN SINK PRESS.**

Ernie Bushmiller's *Nancy* seems to be one of these things that people either really like or really hate. I used to think that it was the stupidest comic strip ever created. But after Bushmiller died and Jerry Scott took the strip over, it quickly became apparent just how good Ernie really was.

While I'm not ready to proclaim Bushmiller a creative genius, I have come to appreciate Nancy's bizarre charms. Whether he did it intentionally or not, Bushmiller's characters occupy a surreal little world, where everybody and everything is drawn in a tidy, clean-line style, and the same dumb jokes and situations keep working over and over and over.

*Nancy's Pets* is the fifth volume in Kitchen Sink's reprints from the series. Each Nancy book is centered around a theme (food, Sluggo, pets, etc.), which makes more sense than a chronological reprinting of the strips, since the series has no real day-to-day continuity. While you'd think that 90 pages of cartoons on the same topic would be overkill, grouping the strips this way gives the books focus, and helps to showcase the series' quirkiness.

Each Nancy volume begins with a short essay on Bushmiller and his work. The essay here, written by Bushmiller's neighbor and friend James Carlsson, discusses the Bushmillers' pets, and reveals that some of the animal gags used in the series were based on actual incidents involving Ernie and his wife. Illustrating the piece is a photo of the Bushmillers and their dog, and a few of the family's Christmas cards. It's a nice "behind the scenes" sort of thing.

As you would probably expect from the book's title, the strips in *Nancy's Pets* involve animals—Nancy's pets (which include a dog whose spots keep changing), Sluggo's pets, and a large assortment of birds, mice, and animals at the zoo.

Series editor James Kitchen has chosen a nice mix of daily and Sunday strips that are mostly from the '60's and '70's, and presents them one Sunday or four dailies per page. The care and quality in the presentation of this material is consistent with the high standards set by Kitchen Sink in their other reprint projects.

Bushmiller's work employs a gentle, sincere humor, and his love of animals is very apparent in this book. Like the previous four Bushmiller collections, *Nancy's Pets* is full of simple and timeless gags that you can't help but get a smile or a chuckle from.

**GRADE:** ★ ★ ★ ½ **Leonard S Wong**

## THIEF OF SHERWOOD #1

**Written by ROGER BROUGHTON; illustrated by SAM GLANZMAN; Published by A-PLUS COMICS.**

Well, Kevin Costner's Robin Hood is a big hit, so here we have one of the first attempts to cash in on the craze. A-Plus Comic's *Thief of Sherwood* probably won't appeal to those who enjoyed Costner's lame movie, but I enjoyed it.

Issue #1 opens with Robin in Palestine during the Third Crusade, leading King Richard's troops along with the evil Sir Guy. Robin is interested in serving the king and his God, while Guy is only interested in killing, raping, and looting. Obviously, these two men are going to clash, and after a betrayal by Guy leaves most of Robin's men dead, they have their "duel to the death". *Thief of Sherwood* #1 ends with Robin riding off in the desert in disgrace. I liked the idea of starting off the story in Palestine, with no law men from Nottingham or King John. I didn't miss them, but I am sure they will show up later.

The art by Sam Glanzman was excellent, especially pages 30 and 31 with the Robin-Guy duel. While I haven't seen much of Glanzman's work, except for a few issues of *Semper Fi*, he is one of the best artists at capturing rip-roaring action.

I know it might be hard to find an A-Plus Comic at your local dealership, but it is worth the effort. *Thief of Sherwood* #1 is a worthy addition to anyone's collection.

**GRADE:** ★ ★ ★ ½ **— Kevin W. Hall**

## FANTASTIC FOUR #358

**Written by TOM DeFALCO; pencilled by PAUL RYAN and ART ADAMS; inked by DANNY BULANADI; edited by RALPH MACCHIO. Published by MARVEL COMICS**

While I really can't say much positive about *Fantastic Four* #358, I can say this, it was *much* better than the 25th anniversary issue a few years back. Basically, this is just one big cop-out.

*Fantastic Four* #358 finishes up the storyline concerning Alicia Storm. It seems that ever since Secret Wars I, Alicia Storm has been impersonated by a Skrull agent. So, to restablish the status-quo, Marvel sends our heroes after the real Alicia. We are introduced to a new super-powered Skrull, called the Power-Skrull, Johnny's Skrull lover is killed saving him (I told you it was a total cop-out), and the original Alicia is returned to our cast. The idea of Alicia being back in Ben's arms could lead to interesting stories, but I doubt it. My guess is a one-issue fight between Ben and Johnny, then everything will return to normal. Just see if I'm not right.

The second story, "The Offical Story" (by DeFalco and Adams), is a trite, boring story about Doctor Doom. Even Art Adams can't save this garbage.

The issue is rounded-out by pin-ups by Mike Mignola, Ron Frenz, John Byrne, Rom Lim, and John Romita, Sr., profiles of our four heroes, and an excellent retrospective article by Peter Sanderson.

I can't recommend that you buy *Fantastic Four* #358, since it is not worth $2.50, but try to get a friend to let you read his. Skip the comic, but don't miss Sanderson's article.

**GRADE:** ★ ★ **—Kevin W. Hall**

## HARBINGER #1

**Written by JIM SHOOTER; pencilled by DAVID LAPHAM; inked by JOHN DIXON; edited by JANET JACKSON. Published by VALIANT COMICS.**

Oooh . . .what an interesting build-up. Here we have Jim Shooter's new super-hero team, and the best thing I can say about it is that it reads like your average Marvel comic.

*Harbinger* #1 begins the tale of a group of mutants (oh no, not them again!!) being hunted by a secret organization that wants to use their powers for evil. Is it just me, or haven't I already read this somewhere before? Our muties are Peter (mental mutant), Faith (who can fly), Flamingo (fire powers), and John (super-strong). I don't mean to harp, but even their powers aren't anything new. *Harbinger* #1 ends with the bad guys declaring war on our heroes.

Anyone who has ever read an issue of the *X-Men* will be all too familiar with this comic. Even the title, "The Children of the Eighth Day," will remind you of a famous X-Men story. If it is Shooter's intent to create his own X-Men, he has failed horribly.

The art by Lapham and Dixon was adequate, like a mid-level Marvel artist team: it wasn't so bad as it was bland and stiff.

*Harbinger* #1? A new era in comics? Don't count on it.

**GRADE:** ★ ½ **—Kevin W. Hall**

## PLANET 29 #1

**Written and illustrated by KEVIN ATKINSON; Published by CALIBER PRESS.**

Kevin Atkinson's *Snarl*, seen previously in *Caliber Presents* and its own three-issue mini-series, is a glop of s-f adventure, social satire, and dark humor. This four-part "future *Snarl* tale" is set about a hundred years after "the advancement of perpetual jet propulsion technology enabled" the American upper classes to launch a utopian flying continent to which they all emigrated.

The Earth below was left to the squalid working classes, upon which the elite dump all their ordure as they float overhead. But trouble has come to paradise.

"A few beatniks, homosexuals, witches, country & western singers, and other undesirables managed to sneak up here," Chief Presidential Advisor Lenard Squakman tells his superior, an embalmed Richard Nixon

In this month's episode of *As the Fantastic Four Turns*

lookalike. Also, something about living in the stratosphere is causing the children of this "new exclusive bourgeois society" to be born as ugly mutants. Worse, the perpetual propulsion is failing. The flying continent is slowly sinking toward the surface where the lower classes, who have devolved into "Living Dead"-type cannibals, greedily wait.

There are two parallel stories. Biff, a relatively handsome teenage mutant, is changing further to look like a giant fly. His desperate attempt to hide his deformity, so he can go on "maintaining my lavish life-style," leads him to a subversive society of psionic witches whom he hopes can cure him. Meanwhile, the White House's inner circle looks for a scapegoat to blame for the collapse of their running-down technology. Squakman picks the same elusive witches. "We can claim their supernatural behavior is DRAGGING US DOWN!" Will Biff escape the government's witch-hunt as he hunts for the witches? Tune in next issue.

Atkinson deftly presents a farce that is so evenly balanced that it can be taken as both a serious adventure and as a sick comedy, like the movie *Escape From New York*. *Planet 29* is the type of comic book that justifies the existence of the black & white independents.

**GRADE:** ★ ★ ★ ★ —*Fred Patten*

## MC SQUARED: A MAN WITH A SERIOUS GAME PLAN #1

**Written by RONALD LAIRD; pencilled & inked by ELIHU BEY II; Published by POSRO COMICS.**

Hip Hop culture has pretty much infused itself into our everyday life, what with rappers selling Pop-Tarts and a hardcore rhymer like Ice-T being touted as a major star (and, judging from his performances, justly so).

Considering their influence elsewhere, it surprises me that hip hop sensibilities haven't insinuated themselves into comics by now. After all, the whole point of subdivisons like gansta and hardcore is visual and emotional, in-your-face confrontation. One would think a medium like comics would be well suited for such confrontations. Well, it is finally happening in drips and drabs. There was Eros Comix's *2 Live Crew Comics* and the upcoming super-hero book *Nubian Force*. Then there's this book from out of Jersey, and it's probably truer to the sensibilities it's aimed at, as well a flawed, but entertaining, product.

*MC Squared: A Man With a Serious Game Plan* is basically a slice of life book revolving around Earl Terrel, a barber and computer hacker. The "Serious Game Plan" of the title refers to Dark Brilliance, an adventure game Earl hopes will be a mix of Hip Hop sensibilities, African history, and roleplaying. Meanwhile, a shooting at a rap concert increases tensions between the police and the black populace. The storyling follows a typical day for Earl leading up to an encounter with the shooter.

So let's get the bad news out of the way right now: *MC Squared* is cursed with some excessively ugly art. The characters here are stiffer than ten-ply particleboard, and the faces sometimes transform from panel to panel. Roland Laird's writing, however, shows a great deal of promise; while awkward in spots, it flows very well. The dialogue, plot, and characterization all demonstrate an insight and understanding that doesn't give into "Yo-Yo, Homeys" stereotypes. Most importantly, Laird is not afraid to handle issues objectively and fairly, The way he addresses black-on-black violence in the story is even-handed and never preachy. He's also able to disseminate information without hitting you over the head with it. It's also quite pleasant to find a book that is both realistic and upbeat without being pollyannaish.

In spite of the horrible art (a condition that I hear will improve as of next issue), *MC Squared* is a decent product that I'm willing to pick up agin, I hope both Laird and Posro will continue to publish the book. Give it a try—you don't need those extra copies of *X-Men* anyway.

**GRADE:** ★ ★ ★ —*Thomas Deja*

## OZ SQUAD #1

**Written by STEVE AHLQUIST; pencilled by ANDREW MURPHY; inked by ANDRE PARKS; edited by E. JORDAN BOJAR. Published by BRAVE NEW WORLDS.**

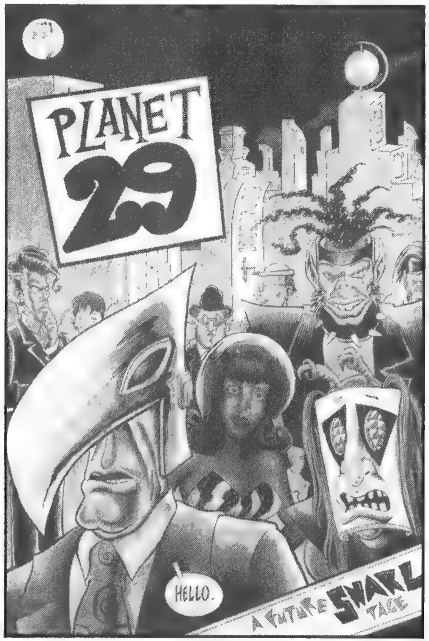
*Oz Squad* is billed a "cyberpunk revision" of the popular Oz stories. "Cyberpunk" here seems to mean little more than "grim and depressing."

Tik-Tok, the friendly clockwork man from Oz, comes to present-day Kansas to visit Dorothy. He immediately goes berserk and starts to tear up Kansas in the way that Bates trashed London in *Miracleman*. Dorothy (now the grown-up executive of the Gale Force headquarters), "Mr. Lion" (a were-lion CIA agent), the Tin Woodsman (a cyborg super-man), and the Scarecrow (a tough-guy private eye) have to stop him.

Much is made of the fact that Earth is a bleak and sick society, unlike happy Oz. This makes the brief glimpse of "Ozchwitz", a barbed-wire concentration camp for Munchkins, a blatant notice that things are seriously wrong in both worlds. The reason given for Tik-Tok's malfunction is so ridiculous that the other characters seem skeptical of it, too, so it's probably a red herring that will be disproved as the mini-series progresses.

*Oz Squad* is well written and well drawn, but it seems more splatterpunk than cyberpunk. It's for Oz completists and for readers whose tastes run to scenes like a maniacal robot turning a hospital into an abattoir. (But at least, as William Gaines said about the EC horror comics at the Congresional hearing, it's tastefully done for this sort of thing.) The ending of this first issue leaves this reader unsure of where the story is going. It could turn out that all this emotional sickness is the result of one of Oz's old enemies, in which case the story might lead to that enemy's defeat and an upbeat ending. Or it could just continue in the "people are no damn good" mood, with Dorothy and the Oz Squad wearily battling against one unsolvable societal problem after another. For what it's worth, the authors do show that they have done their Oz homework and that they know Baum's stories thoroughly.

**GRADE:** ★ ★ ★ —*Fred Patten*



## BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT COMIC BOOK

**Written & pencilled by EVAN DORKIN; inked by STEPHEN DeSTEFANO; edited by FABIAN NICIEZA. Published by MARVEL COMICS.**

This book goes way beyond the mere wacky or zany, and clean into the Platonic realm of the transcendentally gonzo. And only one dollar—I don't remember when I ever had this much fun for one dollar. I like it, I like it.

In case you somehow missed the two *Bill & Ted* flicks, they're cheerful, mindless, surprisingly likable and non-annoying slapstick comedies, highlighted by sideswipes at serious stuff like history and the afterlife. This comic book is both more and less that the films. "Less" because it lacks even the rudimentary plot and character development present in the film (but who cares?), but "more" because in the hands of goofmeister Evan Dorkin, the comic book rises to levels of frenetic, unapologetic insanity that movies can only dream of, and comics seldom aspire to.

What it is, dudes, is a party. If you don't want to party, stay home. If you do, this is the place.

The comic takes off right after the end of the second movie, at the end of which, you'll recall, our heroes vanished into the mists of time for a moment (to the audience) that was, to the boys, 18 months during which they became rock 'n' roll professionals, got quietly married and produced a son each. Then they returned to the present, where they won 25 grand in an internationally televised battle of the bands (got that?).

As we rejoin the boys, they're blowing a measurable percentage of their winnings on a second wedding-cum-mega-party for their friends and family.

Virtually *every* character from either of the movies shows up for at least a few panels in this book (a couple are just mentioned), plus Dorkin throws in a few dozen extra party-goers, bowheads, skankin' ska musicians and white funksters, all with their individual personalities, attitudes and bits of business. In a day when so many artists seem to live in fear of drawing one figure more than is necessary, Dorkin's positive joy in creating seas of characters is more than refreshing.

There's a long (maybe a bit too long) fight scene, and a couple hints at a continuity, but they're no more important than the lyrics to a Metallica song. Just groove on the reverberations.

This book is not for little kiddies—there's some pretty sophisticated allusions, and a couple cheerfully gratuitous deaths. And it's obviously not for those who are too "adult" to have fun reading a comic book. But for those who aren't afraid to put their brain in neutral and get wacky, this book comes highly recommended.

**GRADE:** ★ ★ ★ ★ —*Chris W. McCubbin*

# BOOK REVIEW

## SUPERHERO COMICS OF THE SILVER AGE

**Written by MIKE BENTON; Published by TAYLOR PUBLISHING CO.**

"Providing a comprehensive look at the development of the superhero comic, *Superhero Comics of the Silver Age* will be the ultimate word on the costume comic book heroes of the 1950s and 1960s."

Or so says the publicity brochure for this second volume in Mike Benton's ambitious multi-volume comics history. Boy, talk about loaded for bear! The question is, is the publicist firing blanks or live rounds?

Well, first let me say that I'm reviewing an advance uncorrected proof. There are none of the beautiful color illustrations which the brochure promises will follow in the cloth-bound, 200-page, $24.95 edition. Yet, I think I have enough of a book here to review, and I think that, even with color added, the book will still be lacking.

It's the same problem TK Dean complained about when he reviewed Benton's horror comics history (*Amazing Heroes* #195)—too thin. To borrow my colleague's phrase, Volume Two suffers from the same "superficial survey" of quality. His "history" is like a bowl of alphabet soup—strings of names and dates floating in a thin narrative broth. His "analysis" of the rise and fall of the Silver Age super-hero is warmed over leftovers. I don't mean it's false, I mean it's trite. Can't we think of more to say than, "At the beginning of the 60's we were children, at the end of the 60's we had grown up"?

Not only is the book banal in places, it's inaccurate in others. No, *Adventures of Superman* did not premiere in 1951. Shooting began in '51, the actual premiere came in 1953. No, George Reeves did not get the part wearing sunglasses on a beach. He applied for the Superman role with his agent. I don't know if these gaffes will be fixed before the final product comes out. They should be.

Inaccuracies and banalities aside, the book does have its moments. Benton obviously loves the superheroes and their creators, and he has included biographies of the major characters and their artists, as well as descriptions of more than a hundred Silver Age comics. The final package should make a handsome and useful gift for a young fan or beginning collector.

The rest of us will want more, however. It's a nice piece of work but hardly "the ultimate word".

**GRADE:** ★ ★ ½ —*Gary D. Robinson*

# ETERNITY *HARTE* IN THE RIGHT PLACE

by T.M. Maple

### DOLLMAN #1

**"Based on an original idea" by CHARLES BAND; scripted by BILL SPANGLER; illustrated by MARCELO CAMPOS; edited by DAN DANKO.**

### GROUND ZERO #1

**Written and pencilled by TIM ELDRED; inked by STEVE KREUGER; edited by DAN DANKO.**

### HARTE OF DARKNESS #1

**Written by MEL ODOM; illustrated by DONNIE JUPITER; edited by DAN DANKO.**

### JOHNNY ATOMIC #1

**Written and illustrated by RICK FORGUS; edited by DAN DANKO.**

### KID CANNIBAL #1

**Written by DOUG CAMPBELL; pencilled by ANDREW WALLS; inked by FRED PERRY; edited by DAN DANKO.**

**All published by ETERNITY COMICS.**

We are told on the cover of *Dollman* #1 that these are "Full Color Adventures! Based on The New Movie!" Inside, the text piece lets us know that this comic book series is a sequel to the upcoming movie of the same name in which "the whole concept of the tiny hero has been turned on its diminutive ear."

You see, Our Hero is another in the long line of smaller-than-normal heroes (such as the Golden Age Dollman of the comics), standing only thirteen inches tall. Only now, the concept has been updated to suit modern tastes and this Dollman, police officer Brick Bardo from the planet Arturos (where he is of normal stature), is a tough and violent fellow, to whom creator Charles Band has given "an attitude cynical enough for the audience of today". (Thank God. I was afraid that this wasn't going to be a "realistic" story.)

In the movie, Bardo apparently fights Tough And Violent Battles on Earth before returning in disgrace to his home planet, where he is tossed off the police force (unfairly, of course). The comic book opens with him working as a security guard in a retail store, a task which he handles in his normal uncompromising (ie. violent) manner.

But it turns out that his archenemy, Stolvan Sprug, is still on Earth and for some unfathomable reason he has issued a challenge to Bardo to come and get him. (But then most desperate, well-hidden fugitives do that, right?) Bardo regains his cherished 596.8 Ruger pistol ("The most powerful handgun in the known universe"—and yes, Bardo *does* actually say that) and steals a spaceship (violently, of course) in which to travel to Earth. There he just happens to meet a young woman who has just witnessed her friend burst into flames due to a new "designer drug" that the friend had ingested.

Mad criminal, illicit and dangerous drugs, tough action hero and beautiful young woman—yep, we've got all of the ingredients for a rip-roaring action epic, alright. Plus, of course, the obstacles to the proceedings, no doubt.

However, a list of ingredients is just what this story looks like. Take all the "right" elements and mix them together in a perhaps slightly offbeat manner, and you've got an instant hit on your hands. Though the introductory text piece says that the creators have "thrown in enough social conscience and criticism to give the idea depth and meaning", these aspects are not in evidence. Unfortunately, true meaning and perception are not mere spices that one can add to the cookbook recipe.

There is nothing to distinguish this from any other run-of-the-mill action/adventure story, except perhaps its pretensions, which remain unfulfilled.

***GRADE:*** ★ ½

A handy "Locale Dossier" on the inside front cover of *Ground Zero* #1 tells us that the story takes place at Independence Colony, a planetary outpost of the GMI corporation which produces carbon steel for export. It's a sizable colony, with a population of over 100,000, but we unfortunately don't know how long the colony has been around. Though the "date established" is given as "Sept. 20, SY 720", the "current date" is stated to be "March 3, SY 720". So, barring some form of time travel, I think a printing error screwed up that statistic.

The story focuses around Led Edwards, a petty thief and all-around wise guy, who is also the pilot of a submarine tug in the colony's harbor. His co-workers are Mark, a devoted family man and the tug's navigator, and Lynn, the tough-as-nails co-pilot. At first impression, this looks like it could be a stereotypical "diverse mixture" of characters, tailor-made for standard conflicts and predictable developments. Still, some promise is shown in the way they are handled. In particular, though Edwards is handled enigmatically, there are signs that he might turn out to be something more than the usual nasty-guy-who-turns-out-sort-of-nice.

As the trio embark on their day's work, the colony is hit by a devastating strike from above. Being submerged, the crew escapes the initial onslaught that devastates the industrial sector and results in the populace being rounded up and incarcerated. At the conclusion of the issue, Edwards and Mark are captured by some mysterious armored beings and tossed in with the rest of the colonists. We are left with our trio in a desperate situation amidst circumstances that are less than clear.

A few hints are dropped which indicate that this series might turn into a nicely done mystery of sorts, but of course it could degenerate into a futuristic shoot-'em-up. The potential for either resolution can be seen in this first issue.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★ ½

The tagline on the cover of the premiere issue of the four-issue *Harte of Darkness* series does not inspire confidence: "The Vampire Detective Who Takes a Real BITE Out of Crime!" Oh great, hard-bitten detectives (no pun intended) and vampires—my favorite genre mix. But things look up a bit in the writer's introduction, as he states his desire to have the readers learn something of Dennis Harte, the man.

Harte became a vampire almost thirty years ago in Vietnam, where he was a "veteran" soldier at the age of 19. Back in the U.S., he has fallen into the career of "unlicensed private investigator" because it allows him to set his own schedule and to fit through the "paper cracks" in our heavily documented society.





Writer Mel Odom in fact does make a good attempt at letting us see something of the "inner man", while still carrying out some PI adventures. If Harte's narration is sometimes a bit too stilted and hard-edged, at other times it does allow us a window into his thoughts and into the type of life he has chosen to lead. Odom turns some nice phrases and paints some arresting images in the process. (His background as a novelist is evidenced by his use of the "word pictures"—i.e. that do not fit in directly with the illustrations.) The tortured-vampire-with-a-heart-of-gold may be a bit hard to take at times, but in the end, Harte is a believable character who is trying to preserve something of his old self in what he perceives to be his new life of darkness.

Odom adjusts the vampiric "rules" a bit (for instance, Harte can stand limited exposure to daylight), but this can be forgiven since his changes are fairly slight and seem to help the story along.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★ ★

As the three-issue *Johnny Atomic* series opens, we find ourselves in the American of 1957. Specifically, we are looking at Typical Teen (well, typical amazing and upstanding teen, that is) Jonathan A. Tomick (aka Johnny Atomic) on Halloween night. Coincidently, Johnny is all dressed up in his best atomic duds as he drives through the countryside where he witnesses the crash of a flying saucer. Unbeknownst to Johnny (but knownst to us readers), the saucer is a project (Project X, in fact) of the U.S. government.

But inside the battered saucer, along with the dead (and presumably human) crew, Johnny finds "advanced technology" that "could never have been manufactured on Earth". (Luckily, Johnny is accompanied by his friend Buzz, a science whiz who is apparently well informed about the latest in top secret technology.) To cap off the issue, the surprised duo are confronted by an obviously alien trio who claim to be the creators of the mysterious craft.

This story attempts to mix 1950s teen nostalgia with a 1950s sci-fi story (and perhaps a dash of modern cynicism concerning the government) and is rather engaging as far as it goes. Unfortunately, it doesn't go quite far enough. The characters are all wooden (or should that be "cardboard?") and the situations are of a standard configuration, eliciting little interest from the reader. Maybe creator Rick Forgus has something "cool" cooked up for us in the remaining two issues, but the treatment here doesn't make one too hopeful.

A certain verve and happy-go-lucky spirit is in evidence, but it is overwhelmed by a rather too "cute" presentation and rather heavy-handed and cold art.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★

Nelson is the fattest guy in school. In fact, he's about the fattest guy you'd ever want to meet. Janice is the only girl in school who is sympathetic towards him. Heck, she's the only person in the entire town who doesn't view Nelson with disgust and treat him with disdain. But, as so often happens, Nelson misinterprets Janice's feelings towards him and develops a crush on her. Ultimately, Janice regretfully must rebuff Nelson soundly, so that things will not get out of control.

But things *do* get out of control—only in a way that Janice could never have suspected. Animals turn up half-eaten. Then the town experiences a blackout after an electrical transmission tower falls down. (Janice thinks its supports were *bitten* through.) As the issue ends, Janice (who is sort of an apprentice police officer also) is involved with a group of police officers who are viciously assaulted (and eaten?) by . . . Nelson?

This series looks like it could be an offbeat success. Writer Doug Campbell shows good understanding and sensitivity in portraying the characters. They act naturally and are believable. (The one sour note is struck when all of the police officers gather—at a doughnut shop! –for a surprise party for Janice, despite the fact that the town has just been blacked out by the downing of the transmission tower. Even small-town cops would not be that cavalier in their attitude towards such an event.)

The scenes of carnage are certainly revolting and will no doubt appeal to horror fans. But there is at least the hope that we might get some depth and meaning out of the storyline, especially in the cases of Janice and Nelson. For now, this is at least a bizarre tale that is effectively told.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★ ★

# MARVEL

## EXCELSIOR!

by Alex Chun

**MARVEL: FIVE FABULOUS DECADES OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMICS**

**Written by LES DANIELS; illustrated by JOHN ROMITA and various; edited by JUDY FIREMAN; Published by HARRY N. ABRAMS, INC.**

Usually I fill this space with reviews of five Marvel Comics, but this month I've cheated a little and decided to review something a bit different—a book by another publisher but about Marvel Comics the company—*Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics*.

Whether Marvel comics are the world's greatest is certainly open to debate (unless you're going by market share), but this 287-page hardcover book is definitely the best book about Marvel Comics that I've seen.

Compressing over 50 years of comics, comics creators and industry innovations into a single volume is no easy task, but author Les Daniels' reporting of events that helped shape Marvel for over fine decades is lucid and, just as importantly, non-patronizing. By combining historical facts with telling interviews, Daniels (who also wrote *Comix: A History of Comic Books in America*) is able to connect with both ardent fans and neophytes.

This book was obviously written with the blessing of Marvel, as Daniels had access to reams of Marvel Comics material. The book is also chock full of interviews with everybody who had an impact on Marvel: from comic book veterans like Jack "The King" Kirby to current Marvel Group vice president Michael Hobson. For the most part, Daniels lets his subject do the talking, which is just fine by me. One of Marvel Comics' strengths has always been its accessibility and the intimate connection it forged with its readers as the result of it. Not surprisingly, many of the comments in this book come from Mr. Marvel himself, Stan Lee, who is never at a loss for words, especially when they're in regards to Marvel.

While the writing is clear and concise, the title of the book is actually a misnomer since some decades were certainly less than fabulous. The 1950's, for example, were marked by the publication of the infamous diatribe *Seduction of the Innocent* by Dr. Fredric Wertham, which nearly led to the demise of the comic book industry. In the 1970's Marvel itself went through some tumultuous times when no less than seven individuals occupied the editor-in-chief's chair. (The book also touches on the feud between Kirby and Marvel, but this topic is unceremoniously glossed over.)

But these low points do little to detract from my fascination with Marvel Comics; rather, they add to it. While Marvel Comics is currently enjoying a period of prosperity, *FFD* draws attention to the fact that there is much more to the company than merely mutants and multiple covers.

I have been seriously collecting comics since the late 1970's, and as a comic book "modernist", I had always thought of the Golden Age and Siver Age as the olden ages—periods before artists really learned how to draw and writers really knew how to write. After reading *FFD*, I discovered how wrong I was, and I now look back upon these earlier times with a new found respect, especially in light of the stagnatation that has crept into the current crop of Marvel comics.

*FFD* is basically divided into six sections: pre-comics publishing (1896-1939); the Golden Age (1939-1950), the Seduction of the Innocent and the Comics Code (1951-1961), the Marvel Age (1961-1970), transition (1970-1978), and the Marvel Universe (1978-1990).

The book's first section covers what existed before comic books, pulp adventure magazines and newspaper comic strips. It was only a matter of time before the melding of the two mediums occurred, and in the case of Marvel, or Timely as it was called then (the company would not officially become Marvel Comics for another 24 years). The result was issue #1 of *Marvel Comics*, dated October, 1939.

It should also be noted that it was during this period that publisher Martin Goodman, who owned Marvel Comics up until 1968, established the practice of flooding the market with a hot product until the readers could no longer stand it, then moving on the the next trend. And with the proliferation of mutants and multiple covers currently on the stand, Marvel proves the technique still works.

Section two deals mostly with a trio of characters that were the company's cornerstone through the 1940s and 1950s: the Sub-Mariner (Marvel's first super-hero), the original Human Torch and Captain America. And it's also in this section that the individuals who were to have the greatest impact on Marvel comics are introduced: writer/editor Joe Simon, artist Jack Kirby and a 17 year-old named Stanley Martin Lieber, otherwise known as Stan Lee.

In *FFD*, it is revealed that Lee created his pen name because he was afraid that working on comic books might tarnish his chances of becoming a novelist (the book is filled with this type of anecdote). But while Lee was just beginning to make his name in comics, Simon and Kirby left Marvel in 1941 (already conflicts over the concept of work-for-hire existed), and as the 1950's approached, it seemed like a smart move.

Published in 1954, Dr. Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* doomed many comic book companies (section three), but Marvel was able to stay afloat because Goodman had had the foresight to begin his own comic book distribution company, Atlas Distribution. According to Daniels, if not for Atlas and then a prudent switch over to rival DC's distribution system, the Marvel Age might never have dawned in 1961 when the Fantastic Four were introduced.

As we all know, the FF was soon followed by other groundbreaking characters (section four), including the X-Men, the Incredible Hulk and Marvel's trademark character, Spider-Man. But what most of us don't know is that Spider-Man came that close to never existing. In another interesting anecdote, Lee said that Goodman didn't want to publish the character because he thought that readers would find the subject of spiders distasteful, but Lee was able to throw the character into a dying book that nobody cared about, *Amazing Fantasy* #15, and the rest is history.

It was also during this period that Lee and Kirby, who had returned to Marvel in 1956, perfected what is known as the Marvel method. In effect, Lee would present Kirby with the barest of synopses, and Kirby would return the finished artwork back to Lee ready for scripting. The process worked so successfully that it gained widespread acceptance throughout the comic book industry, and is still currently employed.

Marvel in the 1970's (section five) was marked by a sense of restlessness, as is evident by the number of editor-in-chiefs that came and went before Jim Shooter settled in for his 10-year reign. Marvel was moving in every direction at once. Diverse characters such as Conan and Howard the Duck were introduced into the Marvel Universe, while other Marvel characters found their way into film and TV.

*FFD*'s final section contains chapters on many of today's hot shots, including Frank Miller, Walter Simonson and John Byrne, and the book ends by reprinting four "classic" Marvel stories: a 1954 Sub-Mariner story by Bill Everett; a 1963 Spider-Man story by Lee and Steve Ditko; a 1966 Fantatic Four story by Lee and Kirby; and a 1987 Wolverine story by Chris Claremont and Marshall Rogers? The inclusion of this final story, a premium for Sears stores, puzzles me, for it is far from a classic, but I guess this is one of those things that was thrown into the book to appease the X-junkies.

While I've tried to provide a skeleton of the book, as well as a few of the many tidbits that abound in *FFD*, it is impossible to completely convey the range of subjects the book covers within the confines of this space. Other topics covered in the book that are worthy of note include merchandising and distribtion, the introduction of minority characters in the Mavel Universe and full-page profiles on most of the major characters (Spider-Man, Iron-Man, ect.).

The one major fault I found with *FFD* was the redundancy in the supplementary text. The Character profiles, along with the caption that accompanied the many graphics, often repeated what had already been mentioned in the text rather than providing supplementary material.

The graphics themselves, however, are incredible. The book is filled with hundreds cover illustrations and interior artwork from the Golden Age to the present, and Daniels and his staff have unearthed many rare and unpublished concept sketches for covers and characters. Included are John Romita's original designs for the Punisher and Wolverine, a preliminary Bill Everett Sub-Mariner cover to *Marvel Comics* #1 and John Byrne's pencils for a page had Phoenix lived.

*FFD* will certainly not be without its critics. If your looking for a straightforward critique of Marvel Comics, forget it. As I mentioned before, the book doesn't spend too much space on issues that leave a blemish on the company. Anybody with a clue, however, should be able to figure out just from the title what to expect. *FFD* is the ultimate Marvel fan book and it delivers exactly what it promises: five fabulous decades of Marvel comics.

**GRADE:** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MARTIN GOODMAN'S OFFICE 1938...
SOMETHING MUST BE DONE! THE YOUNG AMERICAN READING PUBLIC MUST BE MADE AWARE OF THE DANGERS OF NAZISM AND FACISM! WHAT CAN I DO IN MY MAGAZINE TO PUT YOUNG AMERICA ON GUARD
I KNOW! I'LL USE STORIES IN MY MAGAZINES WHICH HAVE NAZIS AS THE VILLAINS! I'LL TAKE THE STORIES FROM REAL LIFE!
SNAP!
And SO WAS BORN A NEW KIND OF COMIC MAGAZINE PUBLISHING POLICY!
A POLICY OF TELLING THE READERS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE NAZI MENACE!
AND SO WAS BORN COMIC MAGAZINE COVERS WHICH DARED TO BE HONEST, LIKE THIS ...
MARVEL COMICS
MARTIN GOODMAN PUBLISHER

Above: Original Marvel publisher & owner Martin Goodman. Right: In the '50s Marvel went under the name "Atlas." Below: Unused *X-Men* covers.

# DC REVISIONS, ANYONE?

by Elizabeth Holden

**AQUAMAN #1**
Written by SHAUN McLAUGHLIN; pencilled by KEN HOOPER; inked by BOB DVORAK; edited by KEVIN DOOLEY.

**BATMAN: HOLY TERROR**
Written by ALAN BRENNERT; Art by NORM BREYFOGLE; edited by DENNY O'NEIL.

**BLACK CANARY #1**
Written by SARAH E. BYAM, Art by TREVOR VON EEDEN & DICK GIORDANO; edited by MIKE GOLD.

**OMAC #1**
Written and drawn by JOHN BYRNE; edited by JONATHAN PETERSON.

**BLACK HOOD #1**
Written by MARK WHEATLEY; art by RICK BURCHETT

New life for old characters is the order of the day. Aquaman begins a new series with a new era: a new creative team of considerable talent, a new direction in character and plot, and, it is to be hoped, a new lease on life. Aquaman is one of those fine old DC characters who should endure.

It is a good sign that this version of Aquaman is wearing the old orange and green costume, old-fashioned but tried and ture. It is a good sign that most of the history and personality of the hero seems to be intact.

It is a good sign that Ken Hooper has a fine touch with art, evoking the exotic setting of undersea Atlantis. Except for a tendency to make Aquaman unattractive and sneering, and sometimes too stiff, the art had the clarity and motion which adventure stories need.

It is not a good thing that this history seems to be uniformly depressing. Aquaman's mourning of his lost family strikes a negative note and comes perilously near self-pity. Giving a character great sorrows does not necessarily make him interesting. Multiplying disasters does not always create excitement. There is promise here of an interesting story yet to come, but this introduction is too awkward.

The story is a study in contrasts. "For four thousand years the people of Atlantis have lived at peace in the sea... Today, things begin to change." But Aquaman "has never known peace... He is Aquaman and he is alone."

So we use our handkerchiefs and wait for the battle scene.

We get a slow and suspenseful lead-up, as the surface world and the Atlantean dwellers prepare to go to war, each thinking the other the aggressor. It's a reasonably intriguing political set-up, although hardly original. (Hasn't this also happened a few times to Prince Namor's Atlantis, over at Marvel?)

It made little sense that Martian Manhunter chose not to bring the Justice League to the aid of Aquaman or of Atlantis, because he didn't know if they wanted it. Whether Aquaman wanted help or not, isn't it the job of the Justice League to avert disasters such as genocide?

Moreover, in his depressed and depressing mood, Aquaman himself makes a grudging hero. "They expect so much more than I have to give," he thinks. "Everbody does." Even the dolphins are vengeful here, and retribution is the spirit of the hour.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★ ½

Although the plot involves revenge, repression rather than retribution is the theme of *Batman: Holy Terror*, an alternate-world Batman tale that is unusually substantial.

Suppose Cromwell lived long enough to spread his theocratic Commonwealth to an American empire. Here Protestant-oriented oppression marked American culture into the 20th century. Like medieval heretics, Batman's parents worked against the system, and were killed by it.

Learning that the government he had always respected had murdered his parents, Bruce Wayne, about to join the clergy, finds a new goal in life. From men such as Inquisitor Gordon he learns that the land he lives in is not God's land, but a place in which super-heroes and homosexuals alike are tortured and used by the state.

Just as in the Gotham City we know, Bruce Wayne chooses to fight the evil that he finds. Armed with religious faith, he sets out to find vengeance and instead finds something else—a purpose, and a direction for his faith.

There are several unique and unexpected features to this story, which is powerfully written and adequately illustrated.

Unfortunately, it is often too wordy. Also, the story frequently slips into comic book cliche, a flaw which is made all the more obvious by being surrounded by ideas which surpass those of action-adventure and raise real questions about ethics and identity.

An interesting sequence for fans of DC heroes is that in which Batman learns the fate of his world's Aquaman, Zatana, and the Flash.

This isn't just another comic book. This is definitely not just another book that makes clerics into villains. This is a comic with food for thought, and plenty of action.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★ ★ ½

Black Canary practising her high-heel acrobatics.

Black Canary is not new to comics. She has been around as Green Arrow's sidekick and lover for a long time now, and has in the past been an occasional member of the Justice League herself. Never a high-powered hero, and not often given much personality, she has received more attention from being beaten in bondage in the *Green Arrow* comic than she ever received in years of costumed crimefighting.

*Green Arrow* has featured an ambience reflective of eastern mysticism and ecological concerns. Oliver Queen has found his niche in a zen-inspired crusade—the irony of the phrase is intentional.

In "New Wings," Black Canary goes for spiritual strength from Amerindian wisdom in the form of Aunty Wren, her mountaineering teacher. Aunty Wren introduces her to a talk-show host whose outspoken attacks on racisms have made him a target for killers.

The title of this section is "Domestic Troubles." The two protagonists here, Black Canary and Gan Nguyen (the talk show host), are both impressively heroic in character and action. In fact, Gan Nguyen is so much the epitome of a classic hero that he might have stepped out of a romance novel.

Unlike his role in traditional Green Arrow comics, Green Arrow here is no hero at all. Dinah is angered by his overspending and irresponsibility; he is childishly insensitive to her worries. If this were my first exposure to the character, I would think Green Arrow a fool. Gan Nguyen takes over the role of hero and partner to Black Canary.

This indeed makes the story a new start, free of the set-up which has so long been the status quo in *Green Arrow*. It also gives the reader a sense of again being in an alternate universe, a place in which our assumptions about characters no longer apply. To a Green Arrow fan, this is disappointing.

Whether the characters will be rewritten in any lasting way seems unlikely. For the sake of this story, it is worthwhile to forget the history and enjoy the ride. It is an exciting one. This comic does not offer big surprises or heavy themes, but its grasp of action and drama make it a pleasure to read, and the prose style is sparse and effective.

I might object that for Gan to notice Dinah's dual identity on the first day of their acquaintance, after her secret has been inviolate for years, might be stretching likelihood. I might object that Black Canary's old costume and wig seem old-fashioned and ugly, as well as impractical. Would *you* do acrobatics in high-heeled boots?

I could complain about these things, but I won't. This is adventure-suspense done simply and well.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★ ★

John Byrne's *OMAC* is an oddity: a prestige format-four part series in black and white. Again, it revives an old character with a new slant.

Byrne again show his mastery of comic-book art with devastated landscapes, expressive faces, and stormtroopers inside giant robots. The hero defends an embattled world single-handedly against a high-tech enemy of mysterious origins. This battle leads him to discovery of his own past, and the mystery grows.

It looks like—and it is—a big bang comic: lots of fighting, lots of explosions, lots of narrative panels over pictures of fighting machines and vehicles. Adolescent stuff: a fantasy superman surrounded by beautiful women. Action stuff: OMAC runs, jumps, attacks, fights, kills, and doesn't think much.

Except that he does. This is not a subtle comic, but a subtle theme creeps into it: that of alienation and the sterility of a killer's life. If OMAC had any intelligence to start with, the dawning of self-reflection and his search for identity would be drastically overdue.

Dealing with complex subjects is not Byrne's style. We may have three more issues of explosions in the sky, but the loneliness of a killer makes for the more interesting aspect of this epic.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★

What would you get if you crossed Deadman with Ragman?

The Black Hood.

*The Black Hood* #1 is the latest of the !mpact comics to come out, and the best of them so far. Mark Wheatley can write strong prose, and he does so here, using the frame of Black Hood's letters home to his wife Darcey to weave the story of his origins—a vigilante who becomes a supernatural being in a black hood, one of a cursed brotherhood.

The outstanding page is that of Black Hood's transformation: "I'm ready to make a deal with the devil." There are touches here of the black ambience that Batman stories have at their best, a dark side of heroism that is both noble and tainted. Few writers have managed to pull this off, and Wheatley is one of those few.

Rick Burchett complements this writing by drawing a world of heavy shadows and expressive faces. Water that drips like treacle. Hands that reach with thick, pointing fingers. Light bulbs surrounded by a yellow glow, in darkness. The world of Black Hood is damp, dark and dangerous.

These formidable talents left me wishing that they had put their efforts into a character more worthy of them. Black Hood himself seems neither interesting enough or original enough to grab your attention. Had this comic's plot been developed by lesser stylists, I would have been yawning. There is no aspect to the character that has not been done before. If his motivation is strong, we are not shown it. His crusade against crime had no dramatic trigger like the murder of his parents or his own assassination; there seems to be nothing personal in it. His gripping rhetoric is presented to us without origin or goal. As a supernatural being, he seems at a loss, denying his death and resisting his predecessors. He seemed more interesting when alive.

Still, the secondary characters like Blue and Jeff show promise. As an introduction, this was a memorable effort—a first rate story built around a second rate character.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★ ★

# ROLLING THE BONES A COMICS CRAPSHOOT

by Bruce Canwell

### SLEEPWALKER #7

**Written by BOB BUDIANSKY; illustrated by BRET BLEVINS and MICHAEL BAIR; edited by DON DALEY. Published by MARVEL COMICS.**

### DOOM PATROL #49

**Written by GRANT MORRISON; illustrated by RICHARD CASE and MARK BADGER; edited by TOM PEYER. Published by DC COMICS.**

### TERMINATOR: SECONDARY OBJECTIVES #4 (of 4)

**Written by JAMES ROBINSON (based on a plot from MIKE RICHARDSON and RANDY STRADLEY); illustrated by PAUL GULACY and KARL KESEL; edited by DIANA SCHUTZ. Published by DARK HORSE COMICS.**

### SOLAR: MAN OF THE ATOM #4

**Written by JIM SHOOTER; illustrated by DON PERLIN, BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH, KNOB ROW, BOB LAYTON, and TOM RYDER; edited by BOB LAYTON. Published by VALIANT COMICS.**

I'm a gambling man by nature. I love to play poker (especially against really dumb opponents) and I add spice to my snooker matches by placing a few judicious side bets. I've wagered on the dogs, the ponies, the trots, the slots, roulette, backgammon, blackjack, and Lotto America. Once a friend idly remarked that I'd die with a racing form in my hands; I asked him what sort of odds he was giving.

I even apply my penchant for gambling to comics. With so many titles available it's impossible to read everything. Like you, I have my stable of "regulars"—*Daredevil* and the *Superman* titles, plus *The Spirit*, *Cerebus*, and whatever quality reprint material is available (one month it may be the latest *Lil' Abner* volume; the next, *Polly & Her Pals* and *Flash Gordon* collections)—but every so often the urge to gamble strikes and I buy a handful of books I've never read before, just to see if anything catches my fancy. Though I usually discover I'm not missing anything, an occasional winner comes up to startle and delight me—for example, the recent *Sandman* collections from DC convinced me to add that series to my "must buy" list.

Here then, submitted for your approval, are the results of my most recent "comics crapshoot. . ."

I knew *Sleepwalker* #7 was in trouble as soon as I spotted the asterisk after the first caption in the book: any story that requires an editorial aside to help establish its setting is a tale better left untold. This issue also labors under the burden of being an "*Infinity Gauntlet* Crossover", which is tantamount to being labelled "Instant Filler". An alien slime-beastie menaces New York—Sleepwalker and a host of other second-string heroes battle the oozing horror from the stars—and I'm not kidding when I say the most dramatic point in the whole sequence is a caption that says, "Finally, after many hours of unceasing struggle. . ."

Writer Budiansky also pits his hero against a group of super-powered convicts: he then resolves the situation by resorting to shameful *deus ex machina*. Thankfully the artwork is several notches above the writing. Bret Blevins' clever page layouts are lively and eye-catching, though scritchy-scratchy Michael Bair is not the best choice to ink Blevins' pencils.

Despite the talents of Mr. Blevins, If the comics industry was a horse race *Sleepwalker* would be a lame nag on its way to the glue factory.

***GRADE:*** ★ ½

I confess: *Doom Patrol* is one of my blind spots. I read the first two issues of the revived series (they were written by Paul Kupperberg and drawn by Steve Lightle, remember?), decided the book wasn't for me, and dropped it. In recent years I've had many friends tell me how good *Doom Patrol* has become under its current creative team, but I could never psych myself up to purchase another issue—until now.

*Doom Patrol* #49 appears to be seting the stage for the next issue (the now-obligatory 50th Anniversary extravaganza) by chronicling the reformation of the Brotherhod of Dada, a new team of adversaries for the Patrol. This particular band of weirdoes has names like The Love Glove, Alias-the Blur, and my particular favorite, Agent "!" They're led by Mr. Nobody, who is released from a painting bought by Doctor Silence,

In this action-packed issue of *Sleepwalker*, the hero. . .walks the dog!

MORNING ON A STREET IN BROOKLYN
FOR MANY REASONS THIS IS A MORNING UNLIKE ANY OTHER. THE SCENE NOW WITNESSED BY THESE BOYHOOD RESIDENTS IS THE LEAST OF THEM.
FROM THE MEMORY OF MY HUMAN HOST RICK SHERIDAN, I LEARNED THAT THIS DAILY RITUAL, KNOWN AS "WALKING THE DOG" IS IMPORTANT TO YOU, RAMBO.
LITTLE DID I REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT.





who is then promptly slain. I admit I don't have the faintest idea what's going on here, but any group fo villains that is seeking "the perfect key to global outrageousness" is a welcome change from the Doctor Doom/Darkseid/Thanos wannabees who populate most superhero comics. I am intrigued. . . .

I also appreciated some of the other cute touches sprinkled throughout the book—page 11 is clearly an homage to *The Prisoner*, page 6 shows Robotman discussing two of my favorite entertainers, Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong, and page 7 ends on a delightful note of black humor.

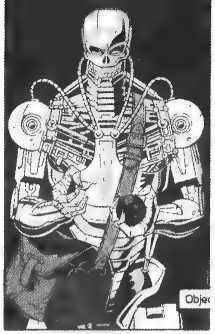
If this installment of *Doom Patrol* has a problem, it's that the concepts are superior to the execution. Grant Morrison's prose style cannot exactly be called "lean" (he uses over two hundred words on page 1 alone), and the work of artists Case and Badger, though intelligent and at times even handsome, doesn't strike the right chords with me. I appreciate it—I'm just not sure I *like* it. . . .

I'm not sold yet, but I think I'll stick around and see what happens in issue #50. If the comics industry was a blackjack game. *Doom Patrol* #49 would be a solid sixteen hand.

***GRADE:*** ★ ★ ★

I've always liked Paul Gulacy's stuff. I was there to see his professional debut—an episode of a Marvel comic called *Fear*, featuring the exploits of Morbius the Living Vampire. I liked what I saw, and from *Fear* I followed Gulacy to *Master of Kung Fu* and the Warren magazines, then to *Sabre* and *Slash Maraud*. Except for occasional work in *Marvel Comics Presents* I haven't seen much from Gulacy recently, so when I spotted his hand in *The Terminator: Secondary Objectives* #4 I decided to forego my usual prejudice against movie-inspired comics (which are never as good as the source material, in my opinion) in order to see what Paul is up to these days.

This 24-page Dark Horse comic is true to the spirit of the *Terminator* films, I suppose: for 21 pages there is nothing but straight-ahead violence, mayhem, and destruction. In direct contrast to Grant Morrison's approach on *Doom Patrol*, the author surrenders almost complete responsibility for telling the story to the artist. From page 3 to page 23, as Terminators C890.L and Z000.M whale the electronic bejeezus out of one another, there are four word balloons and the longest caption is a mere sixteen words. This art team produces some dynamic visuals—inker Karl Kesel compliments Gulacy nicely, and colorist Gregory Wright outdoes himself in places (check out pages 20 and



21; if we ever have to pick the most beautiful explosion in comics history, this gets my vote). And yet. . .and yet. . .

And yet I didn't like this comic. Gulacy and Company engaged my eyes, but the brainless plot and near-absence of text failed to engage my mind. *Secondary Objectives* #4 is literally a case of "all style, no substance."

***GRADE:*** ★ ★

So Magnus Robot Fighter and Dr. Solar have fallen to Jim Shooter's tender mercies, eh? I took my first look at Valiant Comics with *Solar: Man of the Atom* #4. The Perlin-Layton cover caught my eye, and Barry Windsor-Smith also delivers 8 pages of interior pencils, as Valiant gives the term "mini-series-within-a-series" new meaning by serializing Dr. Solar's origin in a special insert section in the first ten issues of the comic. Unfortunately, Bob Layton inks Barry's pencils, an uncomfortable marriage of styles at best.

The rest of the issue features Don Perlin's solid, craftsman-like work — as usual, Perlin gets the job done with his clean and uncluttered style. Meanwhile, Shooter handles the writing chores, opening the issue with Dr. Solar busily romancing a single mother. The scene won't make you forget Miracleman and Liz Moran anytime soon, but then, Jim Shooter won't make you forget Alan Moore, either.

The comic is long on squiggly power blasts and action for action's sake, but it offered nothing to make me contemplate coming back next issuse. If the comics inductry was a dice game, *Solar: Man of the Atom* #4 would have crapped out.

***GRADE:*** ★

Time for me to go call my bookie, but why not try a "comics crapshoot" of your own sometime? It's fun, it's easy, it doesn't cost much, and any number can play. True, you run the risk of reading a few turkeys, but you also have an opportunity to discover some fine comics entertainment you would otherwise miss.

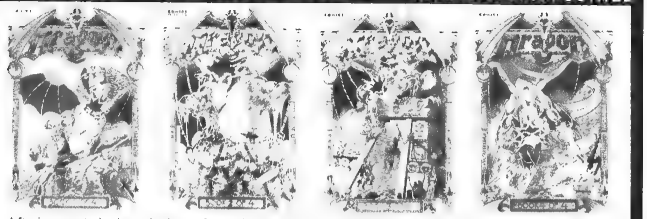
And isn't entertainment what this hobby is all about?

Barry Windsor-Smith on *Solar: Man of the Atom.*

SET OF #1-4: $10. POSTPAID

DRAGON

GRAPHIC ALBUM FORMAT: $9.95 PLUS $1.50 POSTAGE



A four-issue saga starring the popular character from the Southern Knights in solo stories! One of the last survivors of an ancient, powerful race, he is not a man who can turn into a dragon — he *is* a dragon! One who rediscovered his race's ability to assume human form! One who survived! This is the story of Dragon's journey through history!

A spotlight on the newest member of the Knights, sorceror ARAMIS MERROW! The tragic and complex story, compiled from years of the SOUTHERN KNIGHTS, at last available all in one place! Plus SECRET ORIGINS OF THE SOUTHERN KNIGHTS!..... Set of 3: $6.00




CARL & LARRY SPECIAL — $3.00
Those slap-happy merchants of murder — you'll die laugh ing!

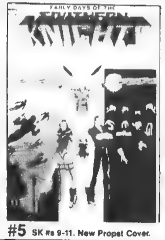
GRAPHIC ALBUMS — $6.95 PLUS $1.50 POSTAGE EACH — ALL 8 FOR $50.00 POSTPAID

#1 Includes SK #s 1 # 2

#2 SK #s 3-5. New Propet Cover.

#3 SK #s 6-7. New Propet Cover.

#4 Origins of SK: #8 etc. New Propet Cover




#5 SK #s 9-11. New Propet Cover.

#6 SK #s 12-14. New Propet Cover.

#7 Collects SK #s 15-16 etc.

#8 Includes SK #s 17-19.

ORDER FROM: FICTIONEER BOOKS, LTD. • 234 FIFTH AVE. SUITE 301 • NEW YORK, NY 10001

# Amazing READERS

***Send your comments on AH or any comics-related topic to: Amazing Readers, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115***

*KEN CHISOLM*
*Brantford, Ont.*

### Renew the Zoo Crew!

Dear Mr. Shaw!

Did you really have to make that crack about the *Zoo Crew* being gone forever in the 1991 Swimsuit issue? Maybe I'm a lone voice crying in the wilderness, but I still have a small hope that DC would consider reviving that wonderful series. That title, especially under you and [Roy] Thomas, was one of the most delightful ones that DC has ever made. I think part of the reason it failed was it came out at a time when grim stories were in vogue. I know the *Teen Titans* certainly was. However, today straight superheroes with a humorous touch are as popular, as the *Justice League* has proved. Besides, that title would be perfect to parody the revisionist revivals DC seems to have a passion for. *Captain Carrot* seemed to anticipate this trend in comics for a return to humor, so maybe it can work now.

Before you dismiss me as a dreamer, I wouldn't be surprised if DC actually did it. After all, when they revived *Angel and the Ape* and *Ragman*, a new series doesn't seem so impossible for the *Zoo Crew*.

• *I too am an old Zoo Crew fan, but I don't see it coming back very soon. Still, nothing ventured... —TH*

*LANEY LOFTIN*
*Monroe, LA*

### Holy MacMoley!

Who was the original Captain Marvel modelled after you ask. Why it was none other than Fred (I'm Dead, So Hurry) MacMurray. With William Frawley as Uncle Marvel. It's also a little known fact that, to return the favor of Captain Marvel being modelled after him, Mr. MacMurray suggested his character in *My Three Sons* be named Billy Batson instead of Steve Douglas. But the TV people nixed the idea. That's right. If you don't believe me ask Andy Mangels. But don't disturb him if he's busy or anything.

The contest said favoritism will be shown towards those letters that have the most interesting things to say, either about the question or comics in general. Are any points given for nifty stationary used in answering the question? Just thought I would ask.

Casper is not the ghost of Richie Rich. Casper is the ghost of Jason Todd. Death is a great attitude adjuster, don't you think?

• *Your stationary was, ah, cute. At least the model was. However, I would have just given her the prize if it had one on those merits. —TH*

*ANDREW HERINGTON*
*Seattle, WA*

### Giving Customers the Business

This is a letter just commenting on this and that that my wife and I have noticed going on in the industry.

Reader Gullibility— What is it with consumers nowadays? The recent push of multiple covers and other such gimmicks of greed are ridiculous. Now, while Marvel will always hold a place in my heart—after all that's what I grew up on—I feel DC is putting out the higher quality mainstream comics.

So when McFarlane, Liefeld, and Stan Lee Overkill arrives with the multiple-glow-in-the-dark-hologram-die-cut-metalic-ink-embossed-covers that arrive biweekly, everyone will rush out to buy three of each, much to the detriment of comics with substance that are being published.

Good Artist/Writers?—I am sorry,

RYAN COOPER

but good artists do not neccessarily make good writers, as so ably proved by Todd McFarlane and Eric Larsen. Now Rob Liefield is coming out with *Youngblood*. I can always hope for a good story but I'm not holding my breath.

Retail Beruit—I really wonder why some retailers are in the business. Customer service seems to be a foreign word to them. I used to work in a comic book store, and while I did not like all the business decisions we made, we were always customers first. Simple courtesies such as guaranteeing file customers comics, being polite, and being helpfull—this is the very least retailers should adhere to, but even this little bit seems to be too much.

Now, the store that has my business is not perfect, but it does try to help the customer, not screw him/her over. When I came to Seattle I went shopping for a new comics store and was appalled by what I found. One store, which shall remain nameless but if you live here I'm sure you can figure it out, not only wanted to charge me $20 dollars for setting up a file but they also said I would get no discount, I had to buy all my comics every Friday or my deposit was forfeit, and if I wanted to drop a title I had to buy it for *three* months afterward before it could be dropped. Needless to say, they do not get my business, which is fairly substantial.

I warn everyone I see to not give them their business. Why so vindictive you ask? Well on my very first visit there I was yelled at not to touch the books, to leave my backpack at the counter, and generally treated like a criminal, not a customer. What was even more amazing was the fact that I found out later that it was the owner himself who was so rude! Business practices like that should not be rewarded with business, just disgust.

*MARK PHILLIPS*
*Johnson City, Tennessee*

**Hidden in this letter is a very serious comment about "outing." Can you find it?**

Yipes!

It's time for a few comments on *Amazing Heroes* #195.

1) I had a large comment written on censorship, but I'm not allowed to print it in public!

2) Boy, Marvel really knows how to overkill a good character! Ghost Rider has appeared in just about every comic short of Barbie! "I am the Spirit of Vengeance! Suffer!" "I am the Preppy of the Malls! Shop!" I know that the comic companies are in it for the money, but do they have to grind on our nerves in the meantime? And a double slap to those fanboys who buy every comic in the world just because ol' flamehead shows up long enough to singe the staples!

3) I am a big fan of the Nightmare on Elm St. series, and I just want to know this. . .What's the big deal over Freddy Krueger dying in the latest movie? Hell, he died before the first movie even started? Actually, the reason that I most like Freddy is because he reminds me of a guy that I dated once.

4) Hello, Big Boy! Your Little Boy loves you!

5) Jim Kirk may die, but his toupee will live on forever!

6) I'm sorry, but I must view outing as an infringement of a person's rights unless that person is openly attacking the gay community. People who want to keep their private lives private, straight or gay, should be able to do so. I don't view someone who was pulled out of the closet kicking and screaming as a good role model for future gay youth. It just shows being gay as something shameful that must be used against you as a weapon. I want people to be openly gay of their own free will. It isn't something to be ashamed about.

However, if a person is gay and fights out in public to hinder the human rights of other homosexuals then he deserves to have his hypocrisy revealed.

7) Yowza!

*GARRY R. JONES*
*Washington D.C.*

**"He's Not a Wimp, Jim!"**

Anyone who feels that Spock's death was a wimp-out needs to watch "The Wrath of Khan" again, keeping theme, plot, and characterization in mind. Perhaps Adam-Troy Castro is aware of different scripts/endings that the average person (such as myself) are unaware of, but based on the movie that made it to the screen, Spock's death come as a logical result of who he is and the events that put the crew in the predicament it was in, a predicament that Spock himself helped create.

*Star Trek II*, *III*, and *IV* are more cohesive than most comics. It is especially remarkable considering that different writers were involved in those movies.

Finally, the elements of resurrection and the undying spirit resulted in space adventures a cut above other movies of its genre.

Spock fulfilled one of the Enterprise's principle objectives: to go where no man has gone before.





*ANONYMOUS*
*New York, NY*

**Backing "Backstage"**

Future Andy Mangels columns should include:

#1 — News on *all* genre related items
#4—Scripts reviews
#5—Interviews

Please don't modify this column. It is highly enjoyable as is. Is the change due to your continued cutting of page count?

● *Actually, there hasn't been a continuous cutting of the page length, though the descending page counts of issues #193, 194, & 195 sort of gave the illusion that there was. #194 represents our usual size.*

*Andy really hasn't been cut. In truth, Andy has been given* extra *space so often that his current size only seems like a cut. Some time back, we agreed on a page count which Andy almost always exceeded, though not without my approval. Considering the way Hollywood was going crazy for comics, the increase was understandable.*

*However, the size of the column never did level off as I expected it too, and I wanted the page count to be more managable, especially since the column's erratic size made it hard to plan an issue. Thus, I felt many of the non-comics movie items that Andy was introducing to "Backstage" could be cut out.*

*While non-comics items won't be barred from "Backstage" altogether (there are some in this issue), a column covering all genre-related material could easily take up the whole magazine. And we have to leave* some *space of Adam-Troy Castro.*

*Relax. Andy will still have the largest column in* Amazing Heroes. —TH

*MICHAEL SUTTON*
*Tacoma, WA*

**I Write the Songs...**

So, what's up in the Valley of the Gwangi?

The list of songs named after comic book characters contines to expand, and I coulnt resist adding a few choice numbers that most of you have probably never heard of. Prepare to be enlightened. The underrated and sadly defunct Chameleons U.K. had a darkly beautiful psychedelic track on their 1986 double-length cassette and CD, *Strange Times*, entitled "Swamp Thing." The ethereal, majestic music is like the soundtrack to John Totleben and Steve Bissette's wet dreams and the lyrics even mention the Demon. Highly recommended, and Washington residents who can't find the disc should request it on 107.7 KNDD-FM, the *only* station in the state worth listening to.

Also: Joy Division's "24 Hours" (from their best, and final, studio album, 1980's *Closer*) not only shares a title with Neil Gaiman's most disturbing work (*Sandman* #6), but has lyrics which, paraphrased, fit in perfectly with the story. For example: "Gotta find my destiny/Before it gets too late." Revised: "Gotta fine Dr. Destiny/Before it gets too late." Pretty cool huh? Someone from the series certainly thought so, and had a character wear a Joy Division jacket in said issue.

XTC, Robyn Hitchcock & the Egyptians, and (I think) R.E.M. (their ace cover of the Quick's "Superman" on *Life's Rich Pageant*) have already been discussed, but Supes is also referred to in two Psychedelic Furs tunes—"Run and Run" and the haunting lullaby, "The Ghost in You." There was a punk band called the Avengers once, although I think they derived that appellation from the British thang. More recently, Pop Will Eat Itself had college-radio and dance-club audiences everywhere chanting, "Alan Moore knows the score," with their "Can You Dig It?" single. The video even features panels from the *Watchmen*.

*DAN D. LONG*
*Quincy, IL*

**Marvel—Defective Products?**

Find enclosed a letter from my comic book supplier. As you can read from the highlighted areas, the comics industry has a problem. I don't understand why. From every perspective in comics collecting, from collector to retailer to distributor to company, everyone is affected by "improperly cut pages."

If I would go into a book shop, pick up a soft or hardback book, find improperly cut pages (before or after I bought it), the shop would replace the book; but because I order through the mail, I don't have that option.

My supplier is telling me he doesn't have the option of getting credit from whomever he bought the books. Why doesn't he? Books are just like anything else, if you aren't satisfied with a defective product, return it for a replacement or a refund. Why doesn't this idea apply to comic books? All my company has now is a very dis-

RAFFAELE IENCO

satisfied customer and I'm definitely starting to look around.

If improperly cut pages are the "very widespread" problem my supplier claims it to be, then somebody should get the problem fixed. The book I have with improperly cut pages has two pages stuck together, two pages of story I have yet to read because of the damage I will do to the book just to read these two pages. The other "page" was from Marvel's infamous Handbook pages. When I pulled the page from the glued binding, it ripped by the holes, so now to replace that page, I'll have to buy the whole "issue" to get the one page. Can you say "Waste of money?"

I also ran into a problem with my Marvel binder. Under normal use—"normal use" defined as opening it once a month to insert new pages—the bottom metal tab that opens the binder's rings broke. If I bought something else that broke under normal use, even if it broke a year later, I would usually be able to get a replacement. This binder didn't even last a year. I have notebook binders from grade school that I abused and the worst that ever happened to them was fraying around the edges.

If other collectors are running into similar problems, I hope they voice their displeasure. There are problems that shouldn't be problems. Defective books should be replaceable just like other defective merchandise. I urge comics companies to change this policy, because if I can't get replacements, then I'm going to want my money back.

*PERRY WHITTLE*
*San Francisco, CA*

### Missing Mireault

I enjoyed the Mireault/Allred interview in *Amazing Heroes* #196. In the bibliography, you neglected to mention one of Bernie Mireault pieces that I know of. It's an untitled six-page piece that appeared in *Wavemakers* #1, January, 1990.

● *Thanks for filling us (and the readers) in.* —*TH*

*KEVIN MATHEWS*
*Singapore*

### Michael Jackson IS Spider-Man!?

*Super-Folks* Considering that Grant Morrison's guttersnipe comments were made in 1990, I wonder what prompted you (Thomas) to mention it now, a year later? In any case, even if I accepted that Alan Moore did indeed "borrow" Mayer's ideas, it does not reduce my admiration for *Watchmen* or *Miracleman* one iota. The former I believe to be the greatest comic story of all time! Anyhow, did anyone think that the Scissorsmen storyline in *Doom Patrol* was a Grant Morrison original?

*Comico:* Bill Willingham's "Perspective" piece was certainly enlightening. I've heard (from Diana Schutz) that *Grendal* will be back in 1992 under the Dark Horse banner. Hooray!! Any chance of a lowdown feature? Anyway, this Mr. Rev character is sure rubbing a lot of people the wrong way—how about an interview with the fellow? Is he getting an opportunity to answer Willingham's comments? The ball is in your court, I think.

*X-O Manowar* BWAH-HA-HA! It's a put-on right? I mean even Marvel's legal department can't be that thick. Can they? Can Dark Horse/John Byrne expect a similar missive when *The NeXt Men* debuts? Maybe this is a personal attack on Jim Shooter. I don't remember Phil Foglio having any problem with *XXXenophile*. And I thought that Marvel's case against Dave Stevens' *Rocketeer* was flimsy! What's next?

*Batman vs. Predator:* Hmm. The crossover disease is as rampant and potent as ever. Jack the Ripper! Dracula! Grendal! Judge Dredd! The list is growing longer. . .Surely, the renewal of the Marvel-DC crossovers cannot be far off. Think of it. Lobo vs. Ghostrider by Simon Bisley, Batman vs. Wolverine by Frank Miller, Deathstroke vs. Punisher by Mike Zeck. The mind boggles. Be scared, be very scared.

*Mike Mignola:* Hey, Ken, you forgot to ask the crucial question. What does Mike think of Kyle Bakers uncalled for remarks about him in *National Lampoon*? Still, Mike appears to be a very straightforward guy and he happens to be one of my favourite artists. It's a pity that his excellent work on *Corum* was not mentioned. "I think I've found my own niche." Indeed, he has. By the way, whatever happened to Steve Lightle?

*The New New New JLI:* Puhleeease!!! gimme a break!!! Not another revised edition of the JLI! I must admit that the funny stuff stopped being funny after Ty Templeton (what about *Stig's Inferno*, eh?) left the book. And *that* Despero episode was a bit hard to swallow. Personally I think they should just five up or maybe give the book to Roy Thomas—who really knows how to handle these complicated group things. Next. . . .

*MDA & BEM:* My only complaint about this feature was that it was too short! These two dudes are the best around at what they do and it's a frigging travesty that they haven't the bloody recognition they thoroughly deserve! I really wish and hope the greatest of success for *Everyman* and *Tales of Ordinary Madness* (if Malcolm Bourne can put a story together) and *The Jam*, *Madman*, and *Grafik Muzik*. (I miss it terribly!)

Finally the letters page contest!

"Will the *The Spider-Man* movie be written and directed by James "Terminator" Cameron like Stan Lee promised or is this another false start?"

Does anyone really care? Wasn't the Nick Hammond Spidey good enough? So far, movies with Marvel characters have been small budget affairs and commercial flops: *Punisher, Captain America, Hulk* etc. and I won't even mention Lucas' *Howard the Duck*!!

I don't think that *Spider-Man* will be any different. In any case, after the failures of *Dick Tracy* and *The Rocketeer* at the box office, Cameron will think (more than) twice before seriously considering it. Perhaps it will boil down to what happens with *Batman Returns*.

But even then, Cameron is not the right guy, maybe, for Spidey. Going by *Terminator* and *Aliens*, Cameron favors a dark setting with Ultra-Violence. Sounds more like Batman or Daredevil material than Spider-Man. Richard Donner (who directed the first *Superman* movie) seems a more obvious choice. So no I don't think it will happen. But how about Charlie Sheen as Peter Parker? No? Then Reuben Blades? MacCauley Caulkin? Michael Jackson?

I'm sorry, I forgot what I'm talking about.

On a more serious note. This week, Freddie Mercury became another AIDS casualty. It's so sad that a man of his talent should have to suffer and die this way. It's so terrible that anyone should have to die of AIDS. But surely for those who can still be saved, a change of lifestyle is totally necessary. Safe sex may not be cough. My condolences to Freddie's family and Queen fans all over the world.

*MARK PHILLIPS*
*Knoxville, TN*

### Didn't We Just Hear From You a Few Pages Ago?

And now for some thoughts on *Amazing Heroes* #196.

1)Thanks for the words on Robert Myer's *Super-Folks*. I had read it years ago and loved it. I've been trying to find it again for years! Anyone have an extra copy?

2) I hear that Marvel is trying to have porno movies ratings changed from X (clearly a trademark infringement) to a non-descript "W".

3) Forget *Batman vs. Predator*. I'm waiting for the Batman vs. the Addams Family series! Uncle Fester could really shock him!

4) If DC already knew who would be in JLI, then why did they even bother with their voting forms? I know that I didn't get the heroes and heroines that I voted for!

5) Hey, Andy, I remember *Mission: Magic*! Rick Springfield, a witch/schoolteacher and her magic cat/statue that opened a gateway. . .why I even remember the theme song!

6) Why am I here? Who am I?

### LETTERS PAGE CONTEST: WHO IS THE STUPIDEST HERO IN COMICS?

We don't mean stupid concepts. We mean what super-hero (or possibly villain) strikes you as the far to dumb for his/her occupation. Obvious choices (Man-Thing, Solomon Grundy) are welcome, but you can vote for Reed Richards if you can say why he'd be too foolish to appear in an ABC sitcom.

Deadline: February 29, 1992.

THE CARTOONIST by T.S. WOOD
ELF-HUNTER© J. LUMMER & T. FERRARA 1991
WAIT'LL PAVE SEE'S THE LITTLE SURPRISE I HAVE WAITING FOR HIM IN HIS COLUMN. HE'HE!
SO TAVIO... YOU'RE AN ELF-HUNTER, EH?
YEP
OKAY THEN MISTER ELF-HUNTER! WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THESE ELVES ONCE YOU BAG THEM?
OH, I TAKE THEM STRAIGHT HOME AND HANG THEM HEAD DOWN FROM THE TREE IN MY BACKYARD. IT USUALLY TAKES 'EM ABOUT 3 DAYS TO CURE PROPERLY.
WHAT?!
GOT SOME STRANGE LOOKS FROM THE NEIGHBORS AT FIRST. BUT ONCE THEY GOT A TASTE OF A GOOD ELF STEAK, BROILED TO PERFECTION, THEY BECAME TRUE BELIEVERS!
AH!! WHERE'S MR. CLAREDOS?!
HE'S BUSY. I'LL HANDLE THIS, SILVER.
AND NOW YOU CAN GET MY NEW COOKBOOK! JUST SEND $6.95 TO TAVIO'S COOKING WITH ELVES/ P.O. BOX 549 EL CENTRO, CA 92244!
INCLUDES ALL THE FAVORITES! ELF-JERKY!! ELF-GUMBO! STIR-FRIED ELF! ELF-SOUFFLE'!
THAT'S IT! GET OFF MY STRIP! GET OFF MY STRIP NOW!
AN ELF COOKBOOK! HE ADVERTISED AN ELF COOKBOOK IN OUR COMIC STRIP!!!
DON'T WORRY. I HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR OUR READERS. TAVIO'S NOT GOING TO SELL ANY COOKBOOKS! REMEMBER, WE'RE TALKING SOME OF THE MOST CULTURED, INTELLIGENT PEOPLE IN COMIC'S FANDOM!

# STROM'S INDEX

**by Dave Strom**

Comments I heard about the *Miss Victory Golden Anniversary Special*: "The Defying Gravity Issue," "The Big Bad Bumpers Issue"

Rank of the most common sayings by a group of small children whom I observed examining comic book merchandise: "Waaahhhoooohhh!", "Dude!", the name of a friend (repeated at least four times in 10 seconds, louder each time), "Where's some blood action?", "Whoops": 1,2,3,4,5

Number of seconds it took one of those boys took to forget where on the racks he got the comic book he's holding (and he's standing less than a foot from where he picked it up): 15

Number of times a handicapped person was introduced with a stutter, as in "a, a, uh, *friend*" in *Jughead* #29: 2

Occurrences of the phrase "physically challenged" in *Jughead* #29: 1

Occurrences of "handicapped": 0

"Visually challenged": 0

"Blind": 1

"Stupid": 1

"Mohawk": 0

Phrase used to describe Jughead's mohawk: "Different look"

Number of other phrases used to describe it: 0

Number of references to soy burgers in that comic: 2

To previous issues: 3

Percentage of the male villains in the Family Entertainment Network's Bible cartoons who have big, hooked noses: 100

[I wish I had noticed this first. But the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith beat me to the punch.]

Chances of Jesus having a big, hooked nose in any Biblical cartoon or comic book: 1 in 1,000,000,000

Chances of Omac and Gladiator (Shi'ar empire flunky) having been separated at birth: 5 in 6

Percentage reduction in the money spent by Moondragon to wash her clothes since her costume has gotten even skimpier and her cape has gotten lost: 250

*"Hi, Dave."*

[In my computer *again*, Wood? Say, how come your voice is so low? Have you got the flu, or is Suzanne Plachette subbing for you?]

*"I am not Wood. I am Mr. Shredds. Meet my friend Mr. Fist."*

*(Sound effects: Large hard burly meaty fists smashing into pastry-soft weak sarcastic writer)*

[I have only one, last, desperate chance...if I can just stretch one more inch, the most important inch of all the inches I have ever stretched, if I can reach my computer's RESET button...]

*"Don't forget to save."*

[Thanks, Shredds.]

*BLIP*

[He's gone! I am victorious! Never again shall the evil Mr. Shredds shred totally innocent innocents! Never shall, uh, either I'm reading too many comic books or I lost more blood than I thought.]

Chances of me immediately running to the bathroom to find and use about a gallon of Bactine and an acre of Band-Aids: 1 in 1

[Ow.]

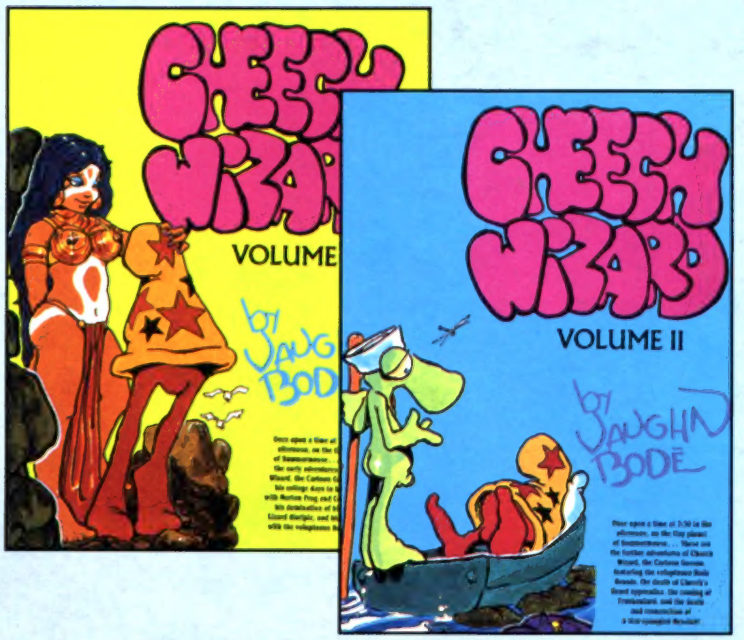
Chances of the above statistics being accurate, since I made them all up: 1 in 1000 ●



"Try it... It's really not that bad."

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

# BODE LIVES!




**The Cartoon GooRoo who gave us legions of lascivious lizards, bevys of bodacious broads, and Cheech Wizard himself may be gone, but his comic creations live on in a series of vibrant volumes from Fantagraphics Books.**

**The most recent addition to the series are *Cheech Wizard Volume I* and *Cheech Wizard Volume II*, the most complete, and most beautifully presented, compilation of Bode's foulmouthed fakir. Even a devout fan will be surprised at some of material within these 128 pages, such as: unpublished radio scripts! never-released syndicate proposals! rare sketchbook studies! plus the best reproduction ever afforded many of these strips (including 32 pages of gorgeous color shot in most cases from the original strips).**

**Also available! Collections of Bode's *Deadbone* work, the great Bode/Wrightson *Purple Pictography*, a set of *Sketchbooks*, and a Bode T-shirt — see the column on the right for details!**

Okay, I'm sold! Please send me the following:

- ☐ CHEECH WIZARD VOL. 1 $9.95
- ☐ CHEECH WIZARD VOL. 2 $9.95
- ☐ DEADBONE COLLECTION $7.95
- ☐ BODE SKETCHBOOK 1 $9.95
- ☐ BODE SKETCHBOOK 2 $9.95
- ☐ BODE SKETCHBOOK 3 $10.95
- ☐ PURPLE PICTOGRAPHY $3.50
- ☐ BODE T-SHIRT (speficy size) ☐M ☐L ☐XL $15.95

name _____

address _____

city _____ state _____ zip _____

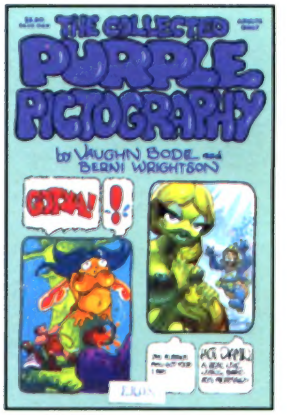
Send all orders to: FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115. Postage and handling for all orders regardless of size: $2.00 in U.S., $4.00 outside U.S. FAX orders: 206-524-2104; or call toll-free at 800-657-1100. Please allow 6-8 weeks for your order to arrive.

NOTE: You must be over 18 years of age to order any of the Bode material listed here.

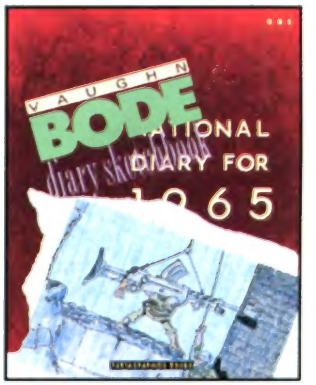
ALL ARTWORK IN THIS AD • 1991 BARBARA BODE

## MORE GREAT BODE STUFF!

DEADBONE: One of the very earliest manifestations of the inimitable Bode universe, from the pages of *Cavalier*. 68 pages of lush pencil-tone artwork.




THE COMPLETE PURPLE PICTOGRAPHY: Twenty-four pages of spectacular full-color work by Bode and Wrightson, assembled in one place for the first time.




BODE DIARY SKETCHBOOKS: For the first time ever, Bode disciples and recent converts can observe the genesis of his spacy, sensual cartoon universe with this four-volume set of facsimile diary illustrations.